

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL
AMONG SUDANESE REFUGEES IN GUILFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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by
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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG SUDANESE REFUGEES IN GUILFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA (August 2010)

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Social capital is defined as the procurement of benefits through membership in certain social groups or networks. Bonding and bridging are two types of social capital development. Bonding social capital refers to that which develops within a social group, while bridging social capital development connects multiple groups (Portes 1998). The channels through which refugees arrive in the United States result in unique patterns of social capital development. In particular, the government organizations and volunteer agencies (VOLAGs) who resettle refugees impact social capital development greatly.

In Guilford County, North Carolina, VOLAGs have resettled a number of Sudanese refugees. Through theoretical and archival research, meetings with resettlement agencies and other aid organizations, participant observation at various community functions, and interviews with refugees themselves, I examined the development of social capital for Sudanese refugees in Guilford County. In particular, I compared the types of social capital that northern Sudanese refugees developed with that which southern Sudanese refugees developed.

The refugees who came originally from North Sudan tend to have a different experience from those who arrive from South Sudan. While most of the northern Sudanese refugees live in Greensboro, most southern Sudanese refugees live in High Point. Most northerners are Muslim, while southerners usually practice Christianity. These basic differences between the communities result in the development of different types of social capital for each of the groups.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past thirty years, thousands of refugees from United Nations camps around the world have resettled to cities across the United States. This process has made significant changes on the landscape of American cities. This humanitarian attempt to find new homes for individuals living in refugee camps around the world produced refugee flows into cities that previously had little diversity. The blending of cultures and ideas has far-reaching effects on the refugees who settle in this country and on the face of this country itself. While their situation is comparable to that of immigrants who come to America on their own volition, refugees experience an entirely different resettlement process because the United States government guides it. These circumstances result in new courses of action for finding housing, securing jobs, and making the social connections necessary to be successful in American society. Refugees are changing the urban geography of cities in the United States.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research is a case study of the Sudanese refugees who currently reside in Guilford County, North Carolina. I will examine the process that brings this population to North Carolina in order to understand how they develop social capital. Social capital refers to, “the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (Portes 1998). Refugees come to the United States through different

channels than immigrants. This difference results in variations of social capital development for refugees. Agencies facilitate their arrival by providing them with initial necessities such as jobs and housing. Because their initial contacts are created through government and other agencies, their social capital development becomes more closely tied with these organizations than it would be if they arrived in the United States through other means.

This thesis will explore the social capital that refugees have developed since their arrival in Guilford County. After looking into what connections helped them get jobs, information, and other benefits, I searched for patterns of social connections. Archival research, review of the scholarly literature, and personal interviews reveal the ways in which refugees make the contacts through which they gain benefits and share information about jobs, education, and other advantages.

Next, I identify important factors that affect the development of social capital for resettled refugees. One factor that has a large impact on refugee resettlement is the Volunteer Agency (VOLAG) that helps refugees to acquire their basic needs when they first arrive. Studying the role that VOLAGs play in the resettlement process reveals the strength of ties that they create for refugees who relocate to the area. Religion also plays an important role in the development of social capital for refugees. The role of religious organizations in creating important connections and networks for resettled refugees offers insight into the benefits that religion can provide for them.

Sudan is an incredibly diverse nation in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture, so the research will examine how social capital development varies for people from different regions of Sudan. These differences might result in variations on the type of associations that people make, as well as the ease with which they might make these connections. This

research will divide ethnic groups and cultures by geographic region. The basis of this division originates from the partition between the northern states of Sudan and the southern states of Sudan, caused by the country's civil war. The refugees who come from the North are mainly Arab while those who relocate from the South are mostly Christian; their cultures influence the experiences they have when they reach their destination in the United States. One of the most prominent differences I found between the northern and southern Sudanese populations was the type of social capital they developed most frequently. While refugees from the South seemed to have more contact with individuals outside of their social group, refugees from North Sudan developed more relationships with other Sudanese refugees. Another major difference involves the actual location of each population within Guilford County. Due to both the resettlement agencies and patterns of resettlement, nearly all of the refugees who live in High Point come from South Sudan, while nearly all of the northern Sudanese refugees live in Greensboro (Omer 2009).

This thesis will also explore the development of a social phenomenon known as heterolocalism and its appearance in the Sudanese community in Guilford County. Heterolocalism asserts that newly arriving groups will maintain their ethnic identity as a community, even though they are spatially dispersed (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). The Sudanese community in Guilford County, although scattered across the county, maintains a close-knit identity and stays connected to other Sudanese refugees in communities across the globe.

1.2 Research Significance

Increases in the number of refugees that live in the United States are causing significant geographic changes in many cities across the country. While some of these cities

are able to provide a stable environment for this new population, other areas lack the means to offer a solid transition for refugees. Research in the resettlement process and the lives of refugees who currently live in the United States provides both government and volunteer agencies with data that will enable them to improve the process in order to maximize the benefits that they can offer refugees.

The most significant goal of refugee resettlement is to make refugees entirely self-sufficient as soon as possible. Social capital development is exceedingly important for reaching this goal. Without the proper connections and social networks, refugees remain dependent on assistance from government and volunteer agencies, leaving them unable to excel in their lives in this country. Research into refugees' development of social capital reveals the best processes for them to develop social networks that will secure long-term benefits for their success. This knowledge will aid resettlement agencies by informing them of which avenues they should encourage and fund in order to provide the best possible aid to newly resettled refugees.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the social capital of Sudanese refugees in Guilford County, I will study the community from a number of different angles. It is important to understand the process by which Sudanese refugees within Guilford County build social capital in a new location and use connections from previous situations in order to establish social networks and secure benefits. This study will make the comparison between those refugees who come from the northern part of Sudan and those who come from southern Sudan to see if their development of social capital differs in any way. Diverse backgrounds, religions and cultures may lead to a wide variety of experiences within the United States, and this discovery can benefit those organizations who offer assistance to refugee groups.

In order to assess the social capital that refugees in Guilford County developed, I had to become familiar with both the process through which they relocated to the area and the community that already exists within Guilford County. This process required a series of steps. After understanding the theoretical literature on issues such as social capital, heterolocalism, and refugee resettlement, I read archived local publications, such as newspaper articles, from Guilford County to better understand the Sudanese community in the area. After conducting theoretical and archival research, I interviewed people who provided services for newly resettled refugees. The final step involved talking to refugees who had resettled in Guilford County to reveal the stories of people in this situation.

2.1 Theoretical Literature

The scholarly literature on social capital, heterolocalism, and refugee resettlement are all relevant to this study. Social capital literature spans a wide variety of disciplines, including economics, geography, sociology, and political science. There were a number of publications, however, that focused on the development of social capital through the process of immigration. Refugee resettlement publications discussed a number of different topics related to relocation. Some of these included challenges that an individual faces when going through the process (Bates, et al. 2005; Chanoff 2005; McSpadden 1987), impacts that a resettled group may have on its host city (Hepner 2003; Mott 2010; Winders 2006), and secondary migration that occurs as a result of refugee resettlement processes (Hardwick and Meacham 2005; Mott 2010).

The term heterolocalism is a key concept for this study. Heterolocalism refers to the ability of individual refugees to maintain close community ties, despite an increase in distance between them. Technology allows relationships to develop with people both across town and on the other side of the world. For this reason, they are able to live farther away from people in their social network and still reap the benefits of membership in these groups (Hardwick and Meacham 2005).

Of particular interest in this literature review is the discussion of secondary migration. When refugees first come to the United States, government and volunteer agencies place them, attempting to find them satisfactory locations throughout the United States in which they have a good chance of being successful. However, there are high rates of migration among various resettlement locations once refugees have established themselves. Through social networks that develop among ethnic communities in different locations, refugees find

ways to relocate to other cities within the United States and Canada with aims of being more successful than they might have been in their original resettlement location (Mott 2010).

Research on refugee resettlement involved a number of case studies and other specific projects that examined refugee communities within cities in the United States. Specific locations included Chicago, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; Nashville, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; and Providence, Rhode Island. Each of these studies focused on different aspects of refugee resettlement, but they provided interesting insight into variations between communities of refugees across the country.

2.2 Archival Sources

After becoming familiar with the theoretical literature, I reviewed local news sources through archival research. Searching each of the major publications in the Guilford County area revealed over 200 articles directly related to Sudanese immigrants and refugees in the area in the past twenty years. The major news publications of this area include the *Greensboro News and Record*, *High Point Enterprise*, and the *Winston-Salem Journal*. The *Greensboro News and Record* contained the vast majority of the articles relating directly to Sudanese people living in the area, while the *High Point Enterprise* and *Winston-Salem Journal* published only a few news stories that were unique from those published in the *News and Record*.

These news sources provided a basic understanding of the demographics and structure of the Sudanese community. Many of the stories in the *Greensboro News and Record* mentioned activities and gatherings that occurred in the area with the Sudanese community, such as church services, holiday celebrations, and prayer gatherings. This also

offered clues to the relationship between the Sudanese community and the rest of the population of Guilford County. With a clearer perception of this relationship and the happenings of the Sudanese community, the next step I took to learn about social capital development was to visit Guilford County and learn about the activities, services and businesses that worked with this community.

2.3 Statistical Data and Mapping

Pinpointing the exact population and location of the Sudanese community proved to be difficult. Census data did not provide adequate data for two reasons. First, it is characteristic for this particular population to migrate frequently within the United States (Shandy 2007), so obtaining an accurate count of those who are living in Guilford County at any one time is nearly impossible. Second, the census did not provide detailed data on Sudanese immigrants living in this region. Data specific to Sudanese populations was nationwide, and the most recent data was gathered in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Due to the mobility of this population and the high rate of recent arrival, this data was obsolete. Other sources of data and statistics on this population were more helpful, although the frequent relocation of these refugees maintains that this data was only marginally reliable. The Office of Immigration Statistics, a branch of the United States Department of Homeland Security, provides information about the number of Sudanese entering the United States, as well as the Office of Refugee Resettlement (Office of Immigration Statistics 2009).

2.4 In Guilford County

Once in Guilford County, I drove around the areas mentioned in various sources and tried to get an idea for the physical impact that the Sudanese community had on the landscape. One surprising fact that this exercise revealed was that the Sudanese community was less visible than anticipated. Neighborhoods where Sudanese immigrants and refugees lived were not markedly different from other neighborhoods. No restaurants or businesses bore Sudanese names. Even the churches and mosques where members of the Sudanese community attended included people of many other races and ethnicities, so they were in no way visibly “Sudanese.” Some Sudanese-owned businesses were unidentified in any way, thus necessitating “insider” knowledge in order to patronize the establishment. This fact may be attributable to a conscious effort by the population to assimilate into society and blend with American culture. In large part, Sudanese refugees in Guilford County have created a cultural landscape known only to them.

I made appointments to speak with people in Guilford County who provided services to refugees in the area. Interviews with employees at three different refugee resettlement agencies in Guilford County offered important information about the process of resettlement as well as about the lives of refugees in the county. World Relief, North Carolina African Services Coalition, and Church World Services each provided a unique viewpoint on the Sudanese Community because they each worked with different groups. Mark Sills of FaithAction International House in Greensboro provided some interesting perspectives about the Sudanese community. FaithAction International House is a center that provides services and advocacy to immigrants and refugees in the area. Sills’ experience working with many different refugee and immigrant groups enabled him to provide an informed perspective on

the Sudanese refugees in addition to sharing information about the services offered by his organization. (Sills 2009) An interview with Jacob Henry, the principal of the Newcomers' School in Greensboro, gave an overview of the services provided to children of newly resettled immigrants and refugees in Guilford County to help them with transition into the public school system and American life (Henry 2009).

Visiting some of the places where refugees spend time offered insight into the daily lives of the refugees in Guilford County. Many of the refugees from the North, the majority of whom practice Islam, spend time at a coffee shop run by a fellow Sudanese-American. The coffee shop plays Arab music and often has soccer playing on the television. It offers ethnic teas and snacks, traditional forms of entertainment such as belly dancing, and water pipes to smoke. Talking to patrons of the coffee shop showed the importance of this location as a meeting place to talk with other members of the Sudanese community. Attending a service at the Sudanese Community Fellowship also provided a view into the lives of members of the community, particularly those who have emigrated from South Sudan. The people who attend this fellowship are predominantly Christian members of the Sudanese Community in Guilford County. The service is in both Arabic and English, and it reveals the importance of camaraderie between the people who came from these backgrounds.

2.5 Interviews with Refugees

After applying for Institutional Review Board approval, contacts from World Relief and African Services Coalition helped me make connections with refugees in the community with whom I conducted semi-structured interviews. The goal of the interviews was to obtain a better understanding of the social networks that Sudanese refugees have developed since

they relocated to the United States and the networks that they retain from before they relocated. The recorded interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes each, with a total of 10 hours of interview time and around 12 people interviewed. I interviewed some contacts multiple times, while others were only available for one interview session. The design of the interview questions enabled me to gather information about the refugees' journey to the United States, their homes in the United States, the jobs they held, the education they received, and their plans for the future. I also gathered information about the connections they had with family members, friends, and members of the Sudanese communities in Guilford County, other cities in the United States, and other places around the world. Interviewees discussed the impact that these relationships had on their success in finding jobs, getting educations, and in becoming self-sufficient in the United States.

After collecting information from each set of interviews, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the interview text and examined it for patterns. These data from theoretical literature, news sources, resettlement agencies, and the refugees provided a thorough account of the social capital of Sudanese refugees in Guilford County, North Carolina.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE

3.1 History of Social Capital

Social capital is a concept that is appearing in an increasing number of social science research, although there is some controversy over the exact definition of the term. Generally, it refers to, “the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (Portes 1998). The concept appears in research by economists, political scientists, sociologists and geographers to explain various phenomena in their fields. One example of the use of social capital in political science includes Peggy Schyns’ study of how political distrust relates to levels of social capital and social trust in a given location (Schyns 2010). In economics, Maura Rauf (2009) researches ways that social capital plays an essential role in the livelihood of small businesses, as well as fostering innovation for companies. Silvia Dominguez (2010) researched the importance of social capital in the overall health of individuals, arguing that social connections define the health choices that individuals make, thus playing a strong role in their individual wellness.

Credit for the first use of the term usually goes to Pierre Bourdieu (Portes 1998; Swain 2003). Bourdieu used this term in the 1970s to describe class-based differences in the development of social networks and the benefits people derived from these connections. Bourdieu used the concept to explain why the vast majority of students in higher education did not have a working class background (Swain 2003). Coleman countered Bourdieu with

the role of rational choice, arguing that decisions made by individuals, such as the schools they choose to attend and the people they choose to marry, have a stronger effect on their level of social capital (Swain 2003). Later, Robert Putnam popularized the idea of social capital with his paper and book, both entitled, “Bowling Alone” (Portes 1998). In his publications, Putnam referred at length to the decline of social capital in the United States, linking things like the popularity of television to declining civic participation (Swain 2003).

Though the above definition refers mainly to social capital in individuals, political scientists often use the term to measure the level of civic participation within a given society (Portes 1998). It is also important to remember that there are both positive and negative aspects to social capital. Though it generally seems that having social connections that lead to benefits might only be positive, many connections might lead to negative consequences, such as in the development of gang affiliation (Portes 1998).

Human geographers identify a spatial element of social capital that needs further investigation and documentation (Mohan and Mohan 2002). Variations exist in levels of social capital from place to place and among different communities and regions. These variations are attributed to a number of factors. Uneven development can lead to social capital being stronger in more developed areas (Mohan and Mohan 2002). In other words, if a certain area is densely populated, such as downtown Manhattan, the social capital of the people who live there and the connections that they are able to create will be different from the social capital developed by individuals who live on a farm in rural Saskatchewan. The location of a community may offer its citizens a better chance for developing social capital, too. Resource availability can also draw more networking opportunities, leading to better social capital. (Mohan and Mohan 2002)

Social scientists use various methods to measure social capital. Some find that tangible measurements such as the geographic location of resettlement groups, newspaper readership, and civic participation give an accurate measurement of social capital. Conversely, others believe that measurement should depend on less concrete concepts such as trust in others (Swain 2003). These measurements, while they do reveal truths about certain aspects of social capital, neglect other important elements, such as the methods through which individuals make connections and the success of these attempts. Social capital can also vary between individuals and between different social and cultural groups as much as it varies from place to place. For this reason, measurements based solely on geographic location (which, of course, is a critical factor) may not reveal all of the multi-layered qualities associated with the social capital development of an immigrant or refugee population.

3.2 Bonding and Bridging Social Capital in Immigration and Refugee Research

Within immigration research, a number of issues relate to social capital. When a person resettles to a new location, it affects their individual social capital (Allen 2007). Many times, they must make connections to new social networks and reinvent their social structures in the new place (Allen 2007). This connection or affiliation with a group or community is paramount to the development of relationships that build social capital, and it often determines migration decisions (Haug 2008). Ethnic niches exist in many urban areas to ameliorate these issues. An ethnic niche is a place within a new country where people of a similar ethnic group live and work (Portes 1998). Examples include Chinatowns in San Francisco and New York City, as well as Little Havanas in New York and Miami. These

neighborhoods provide a source of social capital to the members of this ethnic group. It is a place where they can find a job and gain valuable information from people that they trust (Portes 1998).

Within these ethnic niches exists a phenomenon called bounded solidarity. This term refers to the power of identification with one's own ethnicity or social group (Portes 1998). For example, a Sudanese refugee who opens a pizza parlor in Greensboro might be encouraged by others in his neighborhood to hire only Sudanese employees, thus helping his own group. This idea leads to the concepts of "bonding" and "bridging" social capital (Portes 1998). Bonding social capital refers to that which helps to bring a group closer together and improve connections within the group. Bridging social capital refers to the actions that help connect people across different groups (Portes 1998). Though bounded solidarity can be positive in terms of bonding social capital, it can also be exclusive and discourage bridging social capital, which can hurt business and barriers to the success of people within the community (Portes 1998).

Chain or channelized migration also has an effect on the amount of social capital that is available to an individual at their destination. Chain migration refers to the phenomenon which occurs when a particular sending area becomes linked to a certain destination because of frequent migration between the two locations. It depends heavily on communication between an area where a certain population originates and where they resettle, as well as the influence of family and friends and leads to place-specific places of settlement (Rowntree et al. 2009). Chain migration occurs in three stages, each of which progressively improves the potential for positive social capital development in one's destination. The first stage is called pioneer migration, in which initial migrants relocate. These migrants face the most difficult

issues, but they provide a gateway through which others can migrate and minimize their own risks. The second stage, labor migration, occurs next, in which individuals searching for economic opportunities migrate. Last, the new immigrants' families migrate in the third stage. This is called family migration. Each of these stages provides a different aspect and quality to the social capital that one receives in their place of destination (Haug 2008).

Social capital can be an even more complicated issue for displaced refugees living in the United States. Not only must they relocate to a new country in which they have very little social capital, but they are usually placed in a particular location within the United States by a refugee resettlement agency. Their social connections are often limited to people within the resettlement agency and other new refugees (Allen 2007). These connections may or may not be beneficial to them. In 1974, Granovetter raised the issue of the "strength of weak ties," referring to the fact that weak ties can often be stronger than close ties (Portes 1998). In other words, ties with people who are not as close to the immigrant or refugee can sometimes be more beneficial in offering opportunities than those with whom they are closely related. For example, an American who has lived and worked in the United States his entire life might have better job opportunities to offer a newly resettled refugee than one of the refugee's close friends who only recently resettled in the area himself. This argument was supported by a study of refugees in Portland, Maine, in which the researcher found that those refugees with ties to resettlement agencies were actually more successful in finding and keeping jobs than those refugees who came to America with only ties to family members and other resettled refugees (Allen 2007).

For refugees, the development of social capital is essential to their success in the United States. So far, policies developed by the United Nations and the Organization for

Refugee Resettlement are inadequate in their assistance for newly resettled refugees (Allen 2007). Research in the development of social capital can benefit refugees because it will help organizations to develop programs that may better suit the needs of newly settled refugees, without necessarily costing more money. One advantage of social capital is its regenerative value. Giving a refugee a job may be beneficial to them in the short term, but developing their social networks and connections in such a way that opens multiple career opportunities helps them more. Not only does it profit an individual, but it benefits others that are connected to that individual. Understanding elements of social capital, whether positive or negative, can help to create better policies that support a healthier society (Mohan and Mohan 2002).

In Tamar Mott's study of resettlement patterns of African refugees in Columbus, Ohio (2010), she found that social networks played an important role in the lives of these individuals. Refugees and asylees need connections through which to network in order to ease the transition into life in the United States. Previously created social networks, as well as the quality of resettlement agencies, have a strong influence on the decisions of refugees to move around once they have arrived in the United States. In fact, because of the strong Somali community in Columbus, many refugees have relocated to this area. Some refugees found this community support system so important that they were willing to move to Columbus, even though they had to live in a homeless shelter once they got there (Mott 2010). Whether referring to positive or negative aspects of the community in Columbus, social capital was one of the primary concerns of the refugees. While many of the refugees interviewed had relocated *to* Columbus for this reason, some desired to move *away* from

Columbus because they did not feel that it was big enough to offer the social connections they needed (Mott 2010).

Resettlement in areas with high Latino populations creates a different dynamic for refugees. Winders specifically studied the relationship between refugee and Latino populations in Nashville, Tennessee, a city that has experienced a recent explosion in the immigrant population. The refugees who resettle in Nashville often receive the same treatment as the Latino immigrants, referred to collectively as “New Americans” or “the international” (Winders 2006, 422). Immigrants and refugees are both steered towards the same sections of town, primarily the southeastern region where rent is affordable. The Latinos greatly outnumber the refugee population, which can cause some problems. Refugees sometimes feel forgotten because their issues do not receive the same attention from the local community and government. Latinos, on the other hand, sometimes feel neglected because refugees have more readily available aid from government and volunteer agencies. Fortunately, in the case of Nashville, refugees and Latinos have recently come together to discuss some of these issues, and the local government is taking measures to engage in these discussions, as well as change laws to accommodate these growing segments of the population (Winders 2006).

3.3 The Impact of Refugees on a Place

Although their numbers are small, refugees offer a variety of unique traits and characteristics that change the landscape and demographics of the city in which they resettle. Initial resettlement by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and Volunteer Agencies (VOLAGs), the two main players in this process, often results in the introduction of ethnic

groups that would not traditionally find themselves in these locations (Mott 2010). The racial formations of cities can change dramatically when refugees relocate to areas of traditionally low diversity (Winders 2006), particularly in areas that are not traditional immigrant gateways as are New York and Miami (Singer 2004). Visible characteristics of refugees like dress, skin color, and built structures, such as places of worship, can cause major changes in the images seen on city streets, and these changes can draw unneeded and sometimes negative attention to the refugees (Mott 2010).

Citizens in Lewiston, Maine, did not receive the relocation of Somali refugees positively. Many Somalis began relocating to this dying mill town in the late 1990s from other cities in the United States. They quickly became a very visible part of the landscape. Women wearing colorful hijabs became a common sight on the street, and rumors began to spread about the unfair benefits that these new citizens were receiving. In order to quell the spread of discontent among his people, the mayor of the city wrote a public letter to the Somalis, pleading with them to stop coming to Lewiston. Somalis were hurt and offended, and tensions between the Somalis and the people of Lewiston rose considerably (Belluck 2002).

Refugees can also have positive impacts on the location where they resettle. Some cities have seen changes in parts of the city that were formerly economically distressed. They have seen crime rates drop in areas where refugees are moving, as well as the development of new businesses. Some cities are so impressed with the changes they see that they are beginning to recruit more refugees actively (Singer and Wilson 2006). Utica, New York, for example, reports that the recent increase in the city's entrepreneurial activity is due, in large part, to its refugee population (Mott 2010). Employers in many areas have spoken positively

about immigrants and refugees, stating that, “they are motivated to learn new skills to get on the path to economic stability” (Singer and Wilson 2006, 18). These positive reactions to refugee resettlement prove that, although change is difficult for some places, it can have a positive impact on the vibrancy and economic stability of a city.

3.4 Heterolocalism

Heterolocalism describes changes in the patterns of immigrant settlement within cities. Historically, immigrants to a new city would settle in dense clusters within a city in order to form close-knit communities, interacting through social and professional avenues. Homes were near places of work, as well as shopping centers and centers for recreation. Recent technological changes have affected the ways in which people communicate and interact. These transformations manifest themselves by altering the places that immigrants settle in a community. Physical proximity is no longer a necessity for immigrant populations when they move to a new city because they can maintain strong ethnic ties across long distances (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). They no longer live near where they work and where they socialize because it is not necessary (Hardwick and Meacham 2005). This concept has developed only late in the twentieth century, with the enhancement of the Internet and cell phone communication, and it can be observed in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan settings (Zelinsky and Lee 1998).

Refugee studies can test the theory that successful ethnic community ties are achievable through telecommunications and across larger spatial arenas. Refugees placed in one location within the United States maintain close ties, not only with others in the metropolitan area where they live, but they also communicate with people in other cities,

other states, and even in refugee camps around the world (Hardwick and Meacham 2005). Hardwick and Meacham, in studying the resettled Ukrainian, Russian, and Vietnamese refugees in Portland, Oregon, found that refugee settlement patterns within the city were widely dispersed, influenced by a number of factors. Although refugees are often closely connected through religious and cultural activities, “residential choices are only minimally constrained by participation in ethnic networks” (Hardwick and Meacham 2005, 555). The shopping districts, residential areas, and sites of social activity are widely dispersed over the city (Hardwick and Meacham 2005). As this thesis demonstrates, this is also the case with refugees in Greensboro. Their situations deem it unnecessary for them to cluster in small areas, so they spread out through the county, while maintaining a close-knit community through activities and other forms of communication.

3.5 Secondary Migration

The connections that exist between different ethnic communities within the United States can lead to the migration of refugees to secondary locations after initial resettlement in the country. Refugees follow information flows and social networks they have established, either prior to arrival or once located inside the United States. If secondary migration is going to occur, it usually happens within the first few years after initial resettlement (Mott 2010). After these first few years, refugees have usually found a place that meets their needs, and the population becomes more stable (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2007).

Reasons for secondary migration vary significantly. Economic opportunities are a popular motivating factor for relocation (Shandy 2007). Some refugees hear about better opportunities with higher paying jobs in other cities and relocate. Others move to eliminate

hindrances to their ability to work. One woman talked of moving to Providence, Rhode Island, because she had a friend who could help with childcare while she was working (Mott 2010). Others lack transportation to a job, so they relocate to a place that provides better public transportation options. Cities with a lower cost of living can also be a pull factor for refugees. Minnesota and Ohio have the highest rate of in-migration of African refugees, while California and New York have the highest rates of out-migration. This suggests that refugees are relocating to areas that are more affordable, as well as areas that are not traditional immigrant gateways. North Carolina has only slightly higher out-migration than in-migration (Mott 2010).

Social networks and connections can serve as both push and pull factors in migration decision-making for refugees. Many refugees have cited a lack of social networks in their place of initial resettlement as a major reason for relocating. The feeling of social isolation can cause even the best locations to seem inadequate. This is particularly true for people who come to the United States as “free cases” or without having any prior connections to people in the country. Through the resettlement system, many of these free cases find themselves in an area with no other people from their country or ethnic group. Consequently, many refugees who feel socially isolated or unconnected to the community in their initial resettlement location will relocate to an area where they either already have friends and connections or where they hear of a vibrant ethnic community already in existence (Mott 2010). Other reasons for relocation may include health and safety issues, climate, housing, and education (Mott 2010). Many Laotian and Cambodian refugees have relocated to Greensboro, North Carolina for religious reasons because of a temple built there to support a growing Buddhist population (Singer and Wilson 2006).

Shandy (2007) observed that while many ethnic groups tend to congregate in one or two metropolitan areas, the Nuer ethnic group from southern Sudan tends to disperse more widely across the United States. She hypothesizes that their pastoral lifestyle and social organization in Sudan makes them better able to withstand long distances between them across the United States, while still maintaining close connections with each other (Shandy 2007). Political asylees are even more likely to migrate to a second location after arriving in the United States. It is essential for them to be located in a place where they can receive assistance from peers because they do not receive any services from resettlement agencies (Mott 2010).

This theoretical literature helps to make sense of the complex dynamics at play in the Sudanese refugee population in Guilford County. Understanding the underpinnings of social capital ideas like bonding and bridging, as well as positive and negative types of social capital, clarify the importance for newly resettled refugees to develop different forms of social capital in order to succeed. The concept of heterolocalism explains the geographical dispersal of refugees throughout the entire county. Refugees feel that it is unnecessary to be located near other people in their similar situation, and this gives them freedom to make social connections in different ways with a more diverse population. Secondary migration also plays a factor in both building social capital between Sudanese communities across the country and in making long-distance networks that aid refugees in finding jobs and gathering other types of pertinent information.

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND

4.1 Sudan's Modern History

Sudan is Africa's largest nation in area and a land of incredible diversity. With over 400 ethnic groups and at least as many languages spoken within its borders, the development of an appropriate way to peacefully coexist is a complex task. In order to accurately understand the history of this multifaceted place, one must attempt to analyze the present situation in Sudan (Collins 2008).

Although the northern portion of Sudan is primarily Muslim, it is not without its share of diversity. The roughly 200 ethnic groups that exist in the North fall into five major categories: Afro-Arabs, Nubans, Furs, Nubians, and Beja (Shandy 2007). Only some of the Muslims in the North claim Arab ethnicity, while others hold fast to their African roots. Those who do say that they descend from Arab ancestry separate again into many different subgroups. Ethnic groups and tribes vary considerably, some of whom have long histories of disagreements over land and supremacy. Slavery and racism are prevalent in the history of Sudan, although these phenomena relate to ethnicity, rather than skin color (Collins 2008).



Figure 4.1 Physical Map of Sudan

Separated from the North by the Bahr al-Arab River and the Sudd swampland, southern Sudan maintains many differences from the North (Figure 4.1). Natural barriers protected the people and cultures of the South for many years from invasion of both Arab and Muslim culture to any considerable degree. Mostly consisting of settled farmers or cattle herding tribes, the large Dinka and Nuer tribes dominate southern Sudan, although it still contains an amazing diversity of groups throughout the region (Collins 2008).

From the 1890s until gaining independence in 1956, the British ruled Sudan, with Egypt in many ways acting as overseer to the northern portion of Sudan. Linking the northern part of the country with Egypt reinforced Arab and Muslim practices. With the exception of some Arab merchants, however, few had crossed the Sudd into the southern portion of the country. In 1904, the situation changed when the British funded a number of Christian missionaries to teach English to southerners, to discourage the use of Arabic, and to convert the people of the South to Christianity in an attempt to obtain power over this diverse and formerly ungoverned population. This method of ruling the South in a very different manner from how they governed the North became known as the “Southern Policy,” and it helps to explain later rifts that grew between these two regions of Sudan (Collins 2008).

During the period after Sudan gained its independence, various legislative and governing decisions created more disparity between the North and the South (Figure 4.2). The Arab regions and ethnic groups located centrally around Khartoum held large majorities in government positions and legislative bodies, angering both the people of the South and other peripheral regions, such as Darfur in the West. Multiple harsh movements of Arabization in the South, led by national leaders, caused growing discontentment and led to the first of two civil wars between the North and the South (Collins 2008).



Figure 4.2 Political Map of Sudan

Reasons for disagreements between the North and the South are widespread, involving religious, ethnic, and cultural issues. The South fought to gain rights that they had been denied, as well as more power in the national government. Though the North benefitted from having the national army and government on their side, Sudan's association with the Arab world drew anti-Arab supporters to the South from places like Israel, Ethiopia, and Uganda (Collins 2008). In 1972, the first civil war came to a close with the Addis Ababa Agreement (Beshir 1975). At this Peace Conference, certain agreements about divisions between the two regions were transcribed. The document listed the official languages as English for South Sudan and Arabic for North Sudan. It indicated that the southern region should be ruled by an elected legislative body known as the People's Regional Assembly. They received certain authorities, including the right to question rulings by the People's National Assembly, which ruled the northern portion of the country. The document also stated that, "every person should enjoy freedom of religious opinion and of conscience and the right to profess them publicly and privately and to establish religious institutions subject to reasonable limitations in favour of morality, health or public order as prescribed by law" (Beshir 1975, 167). However, this agreement was flimsy due to the distrust that still existed between the two regions of Sudan (Collins 2008).

The second civil war began in 1983 (GlobalSecurity.org 2010) with the discovery of oil by Chevron in southern Sudan (Collins 2008). Chevron's decision to build a pipeline from the South to the North meant that the North would benefit more economically than the South, and this caused some obvious conflicts. Disagreements here fueled other unresolved issues and led to the building of the Southern People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Collins 2008). The SPLA wanted political autonomy, but they preferred that Sudan remain one country

through this process (Church World Service 2009). Gaining power through the recruitment of farmers, herdsmen, and even children, the SPLA began to fight the army of the North, particularly in regions along the border between the North and the South (Collins 2008).

In an attempt to undermine the SPLA, president Sadiq al-Mahdi ordered the government to supply weapons to the Baqqara tribe, a Muslim ethnic group in Western Sudan who had a conflict-ridden history with the tribes of the South, particularly the Dinka. In 1987, the Baqqara, known more widely as *murahilin* (Arab militiamen) began raiding Dinka villages in the South. The raids frequently followed a pattern: “attack a Dinka village at dawn, kill adult males who could not escape, rape the women, and enslave the children. The village would be burned, the wells stuffed with dead Dinka males, schools and clinics destroyed, and the huge herds of cattle rounded up as loot” (Collins 2008, 176). Eventually the SPLA was able to cause the *murahilin* to retreat, but by late 1988, three million refugees from the South had fled to refugee camps in the North around Khartoum, and 300,000 had crossed the border to refugee camps in Ethiopia. Only 40% of the Dinka fleeing from the raids survived, and a quarter of those eventually died of malnutrition or disease (Collins 2008).

In 1989, Omar al-Bashir, the current president of Sudan, came to power through a military coup (Collins 2008). This coup got its power from the National Islamic Front (NIF), a group that enforced harsh Islamic law on the citizens of Sudan (Collins 2008; Church World Services 2009). Christians in southern Sudan as well as professionals and other intellectuals who questioned the decisions of this government put themselves at grave risk, and many felt obligated to leave the country (Collins 2008). By the end of 1999, over

420,000 Sudanese took up residence in neighboring countries as refugees, while nearly 4 million were internally displaced (U.S. Committee for Refugees 2000).

On January 9, 2005, the second civil war in Sudan finally came to an end with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (Collins 2008). This document states that South Sudan has the right to “govern affairs in their region” and participate in the National Government (Government of the Republic of Sudan 2005, 20). They also have the right to practice their own religion, customs and traditions, while still working together with the North to repair some of the problems that followed years of civil conflicts. The CPA also determined that there would be a six-year Interim Period in which all parties would work together to make government policies and establishments acceptable to those of South Sudan and “[make] the unity of Sudan attractive to the people of South Sudan” (Government of the Republic of Sudan 2005, 22). At the end of the six years in 2011, the South will gather to vote on a referendum to either stay united with the North or to secede (Government of the Republic of Sudan 2005).

A separate problem arose in Sudan as they resolved the issue between the North and the South. The western portion of Sudan, known as Darfur, has traditionally been populated by rural farmers and herdsman, particularly the Fur, Masalit, and Rizayqat ethnic groups. Many of the ethnic groups in this region practice a form of Islam that is infused with various African traditional rites and rituals, distinguishing it from the orthodox form of Islam that is practiced in regions closer to the central part of the country. In addition to historical conflicts between some of these ethnic groups, the fundamentalist Islamic government that took over the country in 1989 found various ways to dominate the region politically. They redrew legislative boundaries to change homogenous regions into Arab-dominated ones. They armed

ethnic groups such as the Baqqara, who claimed Arab descent, and pitted them against more traditional ethnic groups such as the Fur and Masalit. These armed Arabs became known as the *janjawiid*, meaning “ghostly riders”. Beginning in 2002, these *janjawiid* began systematically killing and displacing non-Arab Darfuris (Collins 2008).

4.2 The Process of Relocation

A refugee is defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as, “a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (Martin 2010, 1). Once awarded legal refugee status by the UNHCR, a refugee can take one of three routes. The optimal solution is repatriation to their country of origin, but this can only happen if the situation within that country has changed to eliminate the persecution that previously existed. When this is not possible, the second option is integration into the country of first asylum, or the first country to which they flee. Refugee camps arise in these places, but these countries can rarely sustain large groups of a new population, especially over long periods. The last option is repatriation to a third country, usually to a nation that can offer jobs, housing, and more permanent resettlement options (Singer and Wilson 2006).

Refugees who left Sudan during the civil war initially fled to neighboring countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Kenya (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2004). People fled from both the North and the South, some fleeing government persecution, others fleeing due to circumstances of the war and annihilation of their homeland. Through most of the 1970s

and 1980s, a number of intellectuals from the North received opportunities to study abroad with the promise of returning to Sudan; however, the government of Sudan put an end to this option for its people in 1989 (Abusharaf 2002). In the late 1980s, in and around Khartoum, government agents were arresting, torturing, and killing professionals. Journalists, doctors, lawyers, and intellectuals were sent to detention centers known as “ghost houses” and never returned. During this time, scores of these members of the Sudanese community fled to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Malaysia (Collins 2008).

Many of those who left from the South were fleeing situations in which invading armies of *murahilin* from the North destroyed their entire villages (Collins 2008). Around one million refugees fled to shantytowns around Khartoum, while an additional 6-700,000 fled to neighboring countries such as Kenya and Uganda (Shandy 2007). The chaos of the war separated countless families, leading to a large number of orphaned children finding their way to refugee camps in neighboring countries and developing their own system of survival. These orphans earned the nickname “the Lost Boys of Sudan” and received international recognition (Bixler 2005). Aside from this group of Lost Boys, the majority of those who left Sudan during the civil war were young, highly educated Christians (Abusharaf 2002).

In areas where there are large numbers of refugees living outside of their borders, the UNHCR establishes and runs refugee camps. These camps provide aid for the refugees including food, water, shelter, firewood, and health services. While it can often be a true place of refuge for people who have been fleeing violence and persecution in their own country, camps come with their own share of problems and difficulties. In cases like the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, the refugees in the camp greatly outnumber the host society, causing conflicts between these two groups. In addition, their size can cause stress

on the natural resources of the area. Interethnic conflicts may cause turmoil within the camp, and violence resulting in death is common between warring ethnic groups (Aukot 2003).

Of those refugees in the refugee camp, only around one percent receives the opportunity for resettlement to a third location (Church World Service 2009). The countries that tend to accept these refugees are wealthy places with a history of immigration. These include Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden, New Zealand, United States, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Italy. While the United States settles the highest total number of refugees from other locations, Australia receives the highest ratio in comparison to their population (World Refugee Survey 2007).

4.3 Entering the United States

Although refugees consistently resettled in the United States as far back as the Vietnam War, the Refugee Act of 1980 marks the beginning of a systematization of the process and standardization of services that the United States offers to these groups of people (Singer and Wilson 2006). Since the implementation of this law, over two million refugees have come to the United States from all over the world (Singer and Wilson 2006). Based on various conflicts in different parts of the world, refugees have come in different stages. During the “Cold War Period,” for instance, from 1985 to 1991, the United States saw a large influx of refugees fleeing communist countries. In 1992 during “The Balkans Period,” the break-up of Yugoslavia resulted in a large number of refugees from this region. The majority of African refugees who have resettled in the United States came in the late 1990s and early 2000s during a time known as the “Civil Conflict Period,” a time in which African nations

were rife with civil war and other social issues, forcing millions from their homelands (Singer and Wilson 2006).

Refugees who settle in the United States are chosen based on a priority system established by the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Priority 1 includes individuals who were referred directly by a United States Embassy, the UNHCR, or non-governmental organization (Martin 2010). This group encompasses about one third of the refugee population in the United States today (Singer and Wilson 2006). Priority 2 includes groups of people who are of particular humanitarian concern to the United States, such as the Lost Boys of Sudan (Martin 2010). Around half of the refugees in the United States come through Priority 2 (Singer and Wilson 2006). Priority 3 involves family reunification cases, in which refugees relocated to a location where one or more of their family members have already settled (Martin 2010). Around 20% of the refugees in the United States come through this initiative (Singer and Wilson 2006). In addition to fitting one of these three priorities, refugees must also meet some other requirements. They must be “of special humanitarian concern to the United States,” they must fit the official refugee definition as set forth by the UNHCR, they must have a clean criminal record, and they must “not be firmly resettled in any foreign country” (Martin 2010, 2).

Each year, the President and Congress convene to set a ceiling for refugee admissions into the United States. Currently the ceiling is 80,000 refugees per year, which increased from a ceiling of 70,000 in 2008. Last year, the government resettled 74,609 refugees from all over the world. The number of refugees resettled has continually increased over the past three years; however, the number of refugees resettled between 2000 and 2009 is considerably lower than the number of refugees resettled between 1990 and 1999 (Martin

2010). After refugees submit applications to the United States Department of Homeland Security, they go through a long process of background checks and individual interviews (Singer and Wilson 2006). In the interview process, they describe their life experiences, and the interviewer makes a judgment on whether or not their experiences designate them refugees by official definition (Shandy 2007). The average length for the entire application and interview process is between seven and twelve years, and studies show that individuals with higher education levels tend to be processed more quickly (Mott 2010). Once chosen, refugees receive cultural information and training before they depart for the United States to prepare them for what they will experience (Singer and Wilson 2006). After signing a promissory note stating their intention of paying back all travel costs to the United States government, refugees fly to the United States in groups of 6-75 refugees. Upon arrival, government and volunteer agencies immediately disperse them to different cities across the country (Shandy 2007). The United States Department of Health and Human Services sends money to local Volunteer Agencies (VOLAGs) that provide help for the refugees' settlement for the first four to eight months. Immediately upon arrival, the refugees receive employment authorization, but they must apply for legal permanent residence after one year (Singer and Wilson 2006).

Upon arrival in the United States, all refugees' names go through a Refugee Processing Center in New York City. At this center, representatives from the Organization for Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and ten major VOLAGs¹ across the United States meet every Tuesday morning to decide on the placement of these individuals (Shandy 2007; Mott

¹ 10 major VOLAGs: Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Immigration Refugee Services, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, World Relief Corporation, State of Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services (Mott 2010)

2010). The determination of where refugees resettle throughout the United States depends on a wide variety of factors. If refugees have family members or close friends in the United States, the ORR makes every effort to locate them near these people, as long as it is within 100 miles of the nearest local VOLAG branch (Singer and Wilson 2006). Otherwise, various factors are taken into consideration, including the success rates of VOLAGs, quotas that they must meet, and specialization of refugees with a specific background (Singer and Wilson 2006; Mott 2010). Observers have described the placement process as, “people who sit around a table and ‘do horse trading’” (Mott 2010). Once placed with a local VOLAG, that organization is responsible for performing placement services (Mott 2010).

There are many communities across the United States that have VOLAGs and accept refugees. Refugees have been resettled in all but two of the major metropolitan areas across the United States as well as in every state except for Wyoming, who opted out of the resettlement program (Singer and Wilson 2006). Most refugees first resettled in places with large immigrant populations because these locations already had an infrastructure in place that could help them, including various social service organizations and educational institutions (Singer and Wilson 2006). Some view large, diverse areas as the most advantageous for refugees because they already have a system in place to integrate newcomers into the culture, while others see this as a situation in which refugees feel neglected and do not receive the help that they require. While smaller, less diverse cities can offer more personalized aid to resettled refugees, their arrival is much more noticeable and sometimes not as easily accepted by the residents of the city (Singer and Wilson 2006). Additionally, these places lack important infrastructure to support refugee groups. For example, the schools in these areas are less equipped to handle this population (Bates, et al.

2005). The Preferred Communities Program has recently begun sending refugees to smaller communities that have low unemployment, low welfare use, and a lower cost of living. This initiative has helped to bring more refugees to areas that are traditionally unaccustomed to having a large foreign population, changing the image of these cities considerably (Singer and Wilson 2006). Resettlement agencies took special considerations when resettling the Lost Boys because of the kinship they developed in the refugee camps. The agencies placed them in groups to help ease the transition to the United States (Abusharaf 2002).

The refugees who relocate to the United States have a high success rate in finding and keeping employment. They are generally younger in age: 50% are younger than 25, while 34% are under 18. Fifty-two percent are male, and 55% are single (Martin 2010). Refugees who have been here less than five years have a comparable unemployment rate to the United States population as a whole. In addition to this immense success rate, 69% of newly resettled refugees report being entirely self-sufficient (Singer and Wilson 2006).

Today, Sudanese refugees number around 25,000 in the United States, with one sixth of this group being part of the Lost Boys (Shandy 2007). The Lost Boys began resettling in the United States between 2000 and 2001, causing a large increase in overall Sudanese arriving in the country. This trend changed on September 11, 2001, when security was raised substantially (Myers 2010). The pattern is visible in Figure 4.3, as is the decline of Sudanese refugees after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. Besides coming through the Office of Refugee Resettlement, many Sudanese immigrants have arrived in the United States through the Diversity Visa Lottery, by the help of social networks who are already in the United States, or through other American organizations. Most of the Sudanese immigrants who come through these channels are from North Sudan (Abusharaf 2002).

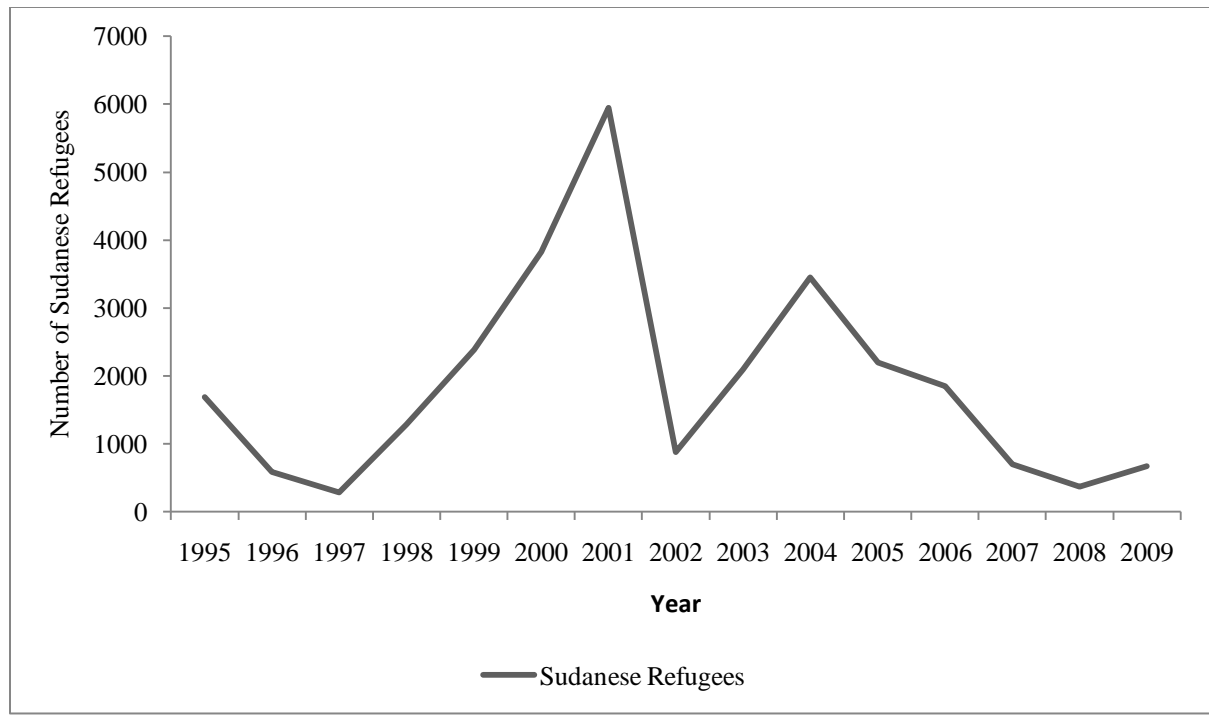


Figure 4.3 Sudanese Refugees to the United States by Year of Resettlement, 1995-2009 (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2009).

4.4 Role of the VOLAG

Volunteer agencies (VOLAGs) play an indispensable role in the initial resettlement of refugees. Along with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, they make important decisions about the city in which they resettle and in what neighborhood they initially live (Hardwick and Meacham 2005). This authority gives them the power to affect the urban geography of certain cities directly and the location of the foreign born within them (Mott 2010). While they do consider prior relations and tend to group ethnicities together when they can, other factors determine these decisions. For example, a movement to resettle more refugees in southern cities like Nashville, Tennessee, and Atlanta, Georgia, is on the rise, due to the lack of unions and growing economies in these cities (Winders 2006).

The VOLAG must be careful to do what is best for the refugee. Their role can help or hurt the refugee's chances for successful integration into the community. Because of this factor, more issues affect the destination of a refugee than just economics, like migration chains and resettlement intermediaries (Brown et al. 2007). VOLAGs play the role that relatives or close friends may play for many refugees by providing refugees with initial contacts and giving them a social network with which they can make valuable connections and find jobs. On the other hand, VOLAGs who take on too many refugee cases can sometimes neglect their clients and create a negative experience for them. If refugees do not receive a sufficient amount of aid, they can have an extremely hard time adjusting to their new surroundings. Placement itself can be a burden as well. Refugees placed in larger cities, like Atlanta and Chicago, often complain that they are unable to afford basic living expenses and often relocate to new, more affordable locations. Some refugees have even complained of being "dropped" by their caseworkers in larger cities. Fortunately, a VOLAG has the power to counter bad placement by offering helpful services and can make large or expensive cities manageable for newcomers (Mott 2010).

While some VOLAGs assign caseworkers to refugees, others rely much more on volunteers, usually from religious organizations (McSpadden 1987). Although it is sometimes difficult to find adequate numbers of volunteers, the volunteer approach seems to be more helpful and successful for refugees. Refugees tend to experience lower overall levels of stress when resettled with volunteers because of the nature of the relationship (McSpadden 1987). McSpadden (1987) compared the processes of resettlement through government agencies with resettlement through congregations and volunteers, and he found that the latter creates a better situation for refugees because it offers the refugees a better chance to follow

American culture more closely and be more deeply involved, giving them more hope for a better future. VOLAG caseworkers often have a higher caseload than a volunteer might. Volunteers, however, are most likely to interact more frequently with their assigned refugee, and they can connect on a more personal level than a caseworker might. This gives the refugees a chance to learn and experience many more facets of American life than they might if they were simply meeting with a caseworker at a resettlement agency office (McSpadden 1987).

4.5 Role of Religion in Resettlement

Religion plays a vital role in the resettlement of many refugees. Because of resettlement preferences in the United States, there is relative religious homogeneity in the groups that do relocate (Hepner 2003). For this reason, religion can be a cohesive factor within the community, pulling refugees together despite other differences that may exist, such as political standing, ethnicity, or regional origin (Hepner 2003). When immigrants and refugees first enter the United States, they quickly feel pressure to “become American,” often feeling required to adopt a new language and learn a new culture. Religion plays an important role in this transition by providing a sense of familiarity because it is one element of their old life that they are not required to change. Therefore, it helps ease the transition from their former culture to that of the United States. Refugees come into this country in search of stability and often find it in the familiarity of a religious ceremony or the reaffirmation of their faith. Immigrants may become more committed to religious practices in their new country because of the cultural continuity between their past and present.

Traditional values and practices can take on new meaning in a new setting because of the sense of familiarity and comfort that they provide (Hirschman 2008).

Not only do religious institutions ease the process of transition from a refugee's home country, but they also act as a cohesive apparatus, providing a means by which immigrants can connect to others of their ethnicity and build bonding social capital. First, religious institutions act as a meeting place for the community (Chacko 2003; Hirschman 2008). They provide a location where people of similar backgrounds can gather on a weekly basis and discuss issues that they experience, as well as develop social capital (Hepner 2003). It is a place where traditional foods and customs can be reinforced and native languages may be spoken (Hirschman 2008). In the Eritrean community in Chicago, Hepner (2003) found the difficulty of gathering together was because of complicated political affiliations and disagreements that have transferred from the home country. Many Eritreans continue to be closely involved in political parties and take sides in issues that occur in their home country. Churches, however, have been the only successful institutions to overcome this barrier by giving people a place to gather and "practice Eritreanness" without breaching the political issues that are sensitive to Eritreans (Hepner 2003, 279). Other immigrant and refugee communities have united through religious gatherings, as well. The Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in Washington, D.C. are primary meeting places for the large Ethiopian community in the region (Chacko 2003). Korean churches in New York City offer similar benefits because Koreans are given the chance to mingle with their coethnics in a safe environment (Hirschman 2008).

One of the most important benefits of religious institutions are the material needs that can be fulfilled through them. Churches and other religious organizations offer the chance for

resettled refugees to learn about economic and social opportunities in the community (Hirschman 2008). They offer services such as finding housing and employment, English lessons and native language lessons, counseling, help for people with aging parents, and helping kids with homework (Hirschman 2008). The sermons can even address specific issues with which refugees must deal (Hepner 2003). Because religious institutions provide an atmosphere of safety and sanctuary, they are able to offer social mobility and status recognition for refugees, advantages that are sometimes not available to them in the outside world (Hirschman 2008).

Churches also play a role in helping newly resettled refugees to become more familiar with their surroundings. Becoming a part of an American church offers refugees a group of sponsors and mentors that can be a consistent support system for them and offer continued assistance in the process of familiarizing themselves with American life and culture (Shandy 2007). When connecting with volunteers through organizations like churches, they have the chance to meet more Americans. Frequent personal connections with Americans tend to help ease the cultural transition between their past and their present (McSpadden 1987).

4.6 Education

Refugees often encounter vast changes in educational experiences as they move from their homes to the United States. Refugees coming from rural southern Sudan offer one example of this change. Many of the younger refugees from rural Sudan did not see the importance of education until they had arrived in refugee camps in Kenya. Although English missionary schools did exist in this region, those who attended were mostly Christianized families and townspeople, while rural families raised their children to be cattle herders or

warriors. Arrival in refugee camps resulted in exposure to the differences between people who had an education and those who did not. They noticed that the ones who succeeded beyond the others were ones who had more education. The Lost Boys, a group of refugees in Kakuma Camp who were living there as orphans, developed a saying: “Education is my mother and my father” (Chanoff 2005, 39). Education, thus, became a survival mechanism for the refugees.

Education at the refugee camps focused on rote memorization, mainly due to the lack of resources available to teachers. Shortages of books and visual aids required students to concentrate on developing their memory skills, rather than focusing on critical thinking skills like analysis and synthesis. One refugee gives the example of learning about carpet. “We were told about them and how to clean them. But we had no idea what they were. So we just memorized. The mind got used to picturing things we didn’t know. We learned about carpets, wooden floors, electricity. It was as if the teachers were talking about angels in heaven” (Chanoff 2005, 41).

Upon arriving in the United States, however, the refugees saw many burdens in terms of education. Placement tests ranked high school graduates from Sudan at the level of 5th or 6th grade, mostly due to the inadequacy of refugee camp schools. Their lack of higher level thinking skills proved to be barriers to success, and many had to be trained specifically in skills like analysis and synthesis. Some inconsistencies between types of education become apparent when refugees came to the United States, as well. Many of the Sudanese learned a more traditional, Bible English in the missionary schools, and when they came to the United States, Americans heard an “oddly elegant, yet fractured and barely comprehensible” version of their language (Chanoff 2005,40). Nonetheless, their passion for educational success has

helped to give the refugees a good reputation to teachers and employers alike (Chanoff 2005).

However, some more educated refugees have seen instances of downward mobility. Education credentials from Sudanese institutions rarely translate to equivalent levels of education in America. Consequently, those who were doctors, lawyers, and other high-ranking professionals in Sudan often must settle for low-wage jobs (Abusharaf 2002) and take additional classes or repeat training they had already received in order to be employable in their fields. This process might take years and cost astonishing amounts of money (Shandy 2007). One pastor from Sudan lamented that the government of Sudan denied him an education because he was a Christian, but institutions in the United States denied him opportunities for ministerial training because he had received little formal education (Shandy 2007).

4.7 Psychological Issues

Refugees who resettled to the United States have survived considerable life-altering and traumatic situations. Many come from villages that burned to the ground in front of their eyes. Some saw friends and family murdered, only narrowly escaping their own demise. Watching others die of starvation or being eaten by lions are situations from which one does not recover quickly. Resettled refugees still carry the burdens of these situations to their new homes and their new lives (Chanoff 2005; Luster et al. 2008).

Psychological issues found in these refugees are many and varied. Many of the refugees come as children or very young adults who are often still dealing with separation anxiety after being unnaturally separated from their parents (Luster, et al. 2008). In refugee

camps, young children are sometimes able to adapt to less structured family forms and adopt other elders as their parental figures (Luster, et al. 2008). Sadly, even this ability to adapt does not guard against the development of issues such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and disruptive behaviors (Bates, et al. 2005). Many children who have been resettled report being unable to control the onset of upsetting feelings about their past, and they have been reported to act overly cautious in various situations (Bates, et al. 2005). These effects certainly have an impact on the success of individuals when they relocate to the United States, and measures to treat these issues should be employed in every situation where it is possible in order to ease this transition.

4.8 Culture Shock

Resettled refugees must deal with the differences between their own culture and that of the one they are joining. This adjustment is even more stressful because of the complexity of the life a refugee must endure before arriving in the United States. Most refugees who come to America are not coming straight from their country of origin. In fact, the majority of them have spent years in other countries, gaining wisdom and influence from cultures apart from their native ethnicity. Consequently, a refugee's culture can become a hybrid of many different cultures, rather than remaining merely one specific culture (Luster, et al. 2008).

Another obstacle that refugees must face is the obligation they still hold to family members in their home country. Many refugees express feelings of stress about the expectations their family members in Sudan hold in terms of remittances. Many family members expect to receive payments called remittances from their relatives that have made it to the United States and are successful. The traditional roles of certain family members can

also add burdens to refugees. One example of this is the elders' responsibility of naming children and the obligation to pay a bride-wealth to family members before a wedding (Shandy 2007).

Refugee children placed in foster care in the United States have their own problems. Oftentimes the children are teens who have been surviving on their own for many years and fending for themselves. When they arrive in the United States, they sometimes have trouble following rules from their foster parents after living on their own for so long. In addition, basic cultural differences can create hurdles to jump. For example, Bates found that Sudanese refugees were bothered by foster parents who commented on their ability to "eat well" because they thought they were being called greedy. Sometimes male children refused to learn to cook because this contradicted the gender roles that they learned in Sudan. In addition, the differences in acceptable displays of affection between people of the same sex can be misinterpreted. In Sudan, it is perfectly normal and common for two men to hold hands in public; however, this act holds other connotations in the United States (Bates, et al. 2005).

Some of the problems that refugees encounter link directly to the inconsistencies between ethnic group and nationality, and they reflect how these differences play out in refugees' new surroundings. In some cases, such as those with the Tigrinya and Amharic Ethiopians and Eritreans in Chicago, disagreements between ethnic groups reappear in America and can exacerbate issues that are already difficult for resettled refugees. Not only do these refugees have to find similarities and common ground with others in a new world, but they face disagreements and issues with people who have experienced a similar situation and might be able to help them most (McSpadden 1987). Sometimes unawareness of specific

facets of an ethnic group's culture can cause resettlement agencies to make mistakes that exacerbate the refugee's difficulties. Abusharaf (2002) presents the case of Naya, a Nuer refugee who was not able to speak any language besides Nuer. She was resettled in Hartford, Connecticut, where other southern Sudanese were Dinka and did not speak her language. When emergency care was needed, social workers had much difficulty locating someone who could interpret for them. Further, within the Nuer ethnic group, people associate with specific lineages and smaller sub-groups, many of which are separated within the United States and cause difficulty upon initial resettlement (Shandy 2007).

CHAPTER V

REFUGEES IN GUILFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

African refugees are widely distributed across the United States, although they tend to concentrate in certain areas due to resettlement processes and secondary migration. Some African populations have begun to concentrate in particular cities. For instance, 50% of the Somalis in the United States live in the five cities of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; and Seattle, Washington (Mott 2010). Of all African refugee populations, the Sudanese refugees are the most spread out across the country, with large populations of them in many different states, due in part to the wide dispersal of initial resettlement (Figure 5.1). Initial resettlement ranks highest in Texas, Arizona, New York, Tennessee, and Iowa. The highest population today exists in Nebraska, which is largely a result of secondary migration (Mott 2010). In the 1990s, African refugees began to receive resettlement placements in North Carolina in large numbers, particularly in Guilford County where there were several resettlement agencies (Mott 2010). Today, North Carolina ranks tenth in resettlement of all refugees, with 2,235 refugees resettled in 2009 (Martin 2010). According to African Services Coalition in Greensboro, there are approximately 5,000 Sudanese living in Guilford County today, although an accurate estimation is nearly impossible with the frequency of secondary migration that occurs between different Sudanese communities within the United States (Shandy 2007; Omer 2009).

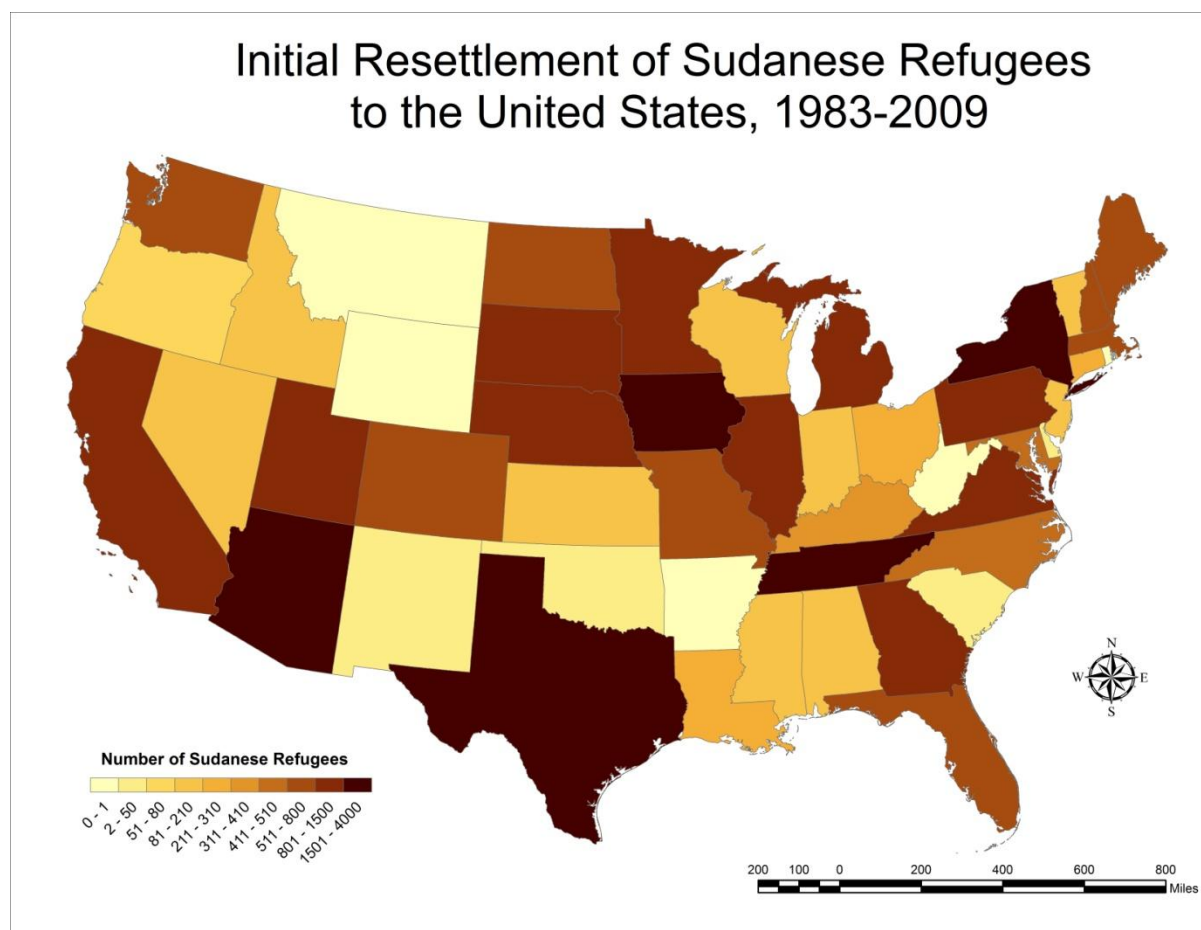


Figure 5.1 Initial Resettlement of Sudanese Refugees to the United States, 1983-2009. (Not shown: Alaska received 46 refugees; Hawaii received 0 refugees)

Sudanese refugees who have resettled in Guilford County have created a small and intimate community. They have a close connection with each other, offering comfort and support from people who have survived similar backgrounds. They also have a healthy supply of organizations, formal and informal, ready to help them integrate successfully into society and feel comfortable in their new surroundings.

Newspaper articles relating to Sudanese immigrants and refugees provide a lot of information about the Sudanese community. Local newspapers in Greensboro and High Point include the *Winston-Salem Journal*, the *Greensboro News and Record* and the *High Point*

Enterprise. The vast majority of articles involving Sudanese immigrants and refugees appeared in the *Greensboro News and Record* because the majority of the population lives in Greensboro. By reading these accounts, I learned about the connection between the Sudanese and the local members of the community, their connections with people in Sudan, the ways in which Sudanese connect with each other, and their sources of education, housing, and employment.

In addition to archival research, I conducted personal interviews with representatives from resettlement agencies and other organizations involved in aiding refugees upon arrival to the area to gain insight into the community's cohesion. The agencies with which on-site interviews or tours were conducted included North Carolina African Services Coalition, World Relief, and Church World Service.

5.1 Relationship between Americans and the Sudanese Community

Many newspaper articles featured stories about ways that local Americans had helped Sudanese refugees, giving them an opportunity to develop bridging social capital (Firesheets 2007). One series of articles told the story of Alice Alesio Lawrence, a Sudanese refugee who suffered from leukemia. When her illness worsened, a local church ran a series of fundraisers to fly her brother to Greensboro from Sudan for a bone marrow transplant operation (McLaughlin 2006; Moore-Painter and Peebles 2006). Another series of articles features Jodi Herring, an American who became involved in helping with the resettlement process through her church. After getting to know a number of Lost Boys, she decided to fly to the refugee camp where they had been living in Kenya. She was able to relay a number of important messages, including proposing marriage to one of the refugees' fiancées for him

(Banks 2002b). Other articles discuss the roles that resettlement agencies play in the relocation of refugees and their acclimation to life in the United States (Bailey 2010; Maheras 2008). These stories display the relationship that exists between the refugees in Guilford County and the citizens there, and it affirms that this relationship is heavily reliant on connections made through religious organizations. Newspaper research indicated a large number of instances in which Sudanese refugees were speaking about the war in Sudan and about their struggle. Articles referred to refugees speaking at universities, high schools, and churches. They also mentioned refugees traveling to locations like Atlanta to speak and refugees coming from places like Washington, D.C. to speak to people in Greensboro (Fernandez 2001; Giunca 2009; *Greensboro News and Record* 2004).

5.2 Sudanese Connections with their Homeland

Connections that the Sudanese community maintains with people beyond Guilford County appeared in many of the articles involving Sudanese immigrants and refugees, directly relating to Hardwick and Meacham's study of heterolocalism in Portland, Oregon (2005). Heterolocalism is demonstrated by the propensity for refugees to connect with people in many different locations aside from those individuals from their ethnic group that live nearby. These connections, made easy by such technologies as cell phones and the Internet, enable groups to receive information and benefits from many locations, rather than only receiving these things from people who live nearby (Hardwick and Meacham 2005). Recently, many of the articles about the Sudanese tell stories of refugees who have been able to reconnect with their family members that are still in Africa. One refugee, for example, was able to fly home to see his mother whom he had not seen for 22 years (Rowe 2009). A few

stories mention connections with people in other refugee communities in the United States and abroad (Rowe 2006; Schlosser 2006; Seals 2008). Articles mentioned annual gatherings with people from various other Sudanese communities (Church 2004). One woman had been engaged to a man from her village, who relocated to Sydney, Australia, but the resettlement process kept them apart until they were officially married. They had to communicate via phone from across the globe daily until they were able to meet together and wed (Ahearn 2003). Connections with relatives and friends in Africa resulted in the resettlement of many relatives who have been able to relocate through the Family Reunification program (Seals 2008). These connections have resulted in Sudanese refugees starting organizations such as the Lost Boys Foundation and Project Education Sudan that raise money to fund projects in their home villages (Banks 2002a; Giunca 2009; Rowe 2006). Some have been back to visit more recently and have rekindled family relationships, as well as marrying people from their home villages (Fernandez 2009; Rowe 2008; Seals 2008).

5.3 The Sudanese Community in Guilford County

News articles in the *Greensboro News and Record* discuss various formal and informal networks through which Sudanese people are connected. Various organizations offer Sudanese people a chance to gather, such as the Sudanese Community Fellowship, the Lost Boys Choir, and Sudanese Choir of the Triad (Banks 2002c; Burchette 2005a). In addition to these connections, articles highlight ways in which Sudanese immigrants and refugees support each other informally. Omer Omer discussed the way that Sudanese people help others as they come into the community. When immigrants move to Greensboro, they often begin by rooming with a Sudanese immigrant who has been there for a period and can

help acquaint them to their surroundings, find them a job, get them a social security card, and teach them the ways of society in the United States. After a new refugee has become proficient, it is then his duty to take in new Sudanese immigrants (Banks 2002e). This example of bonding social capital represents the strength that bounded solidarity can have in an ethnic community.

A physical location such as a coffee shop can provide a place where newcomers can gather, exchange news about home, and provide support. In Greensboro, the Al-Basha Hookah Lounge provides this space (Figure 5.2). The proprietor is northern Sudanese and he has created a place where refugees regularly gather. Interestingly, the hookah lounge is not readily visible on the landscape. It is located in a nondescript strip mall without any signage.

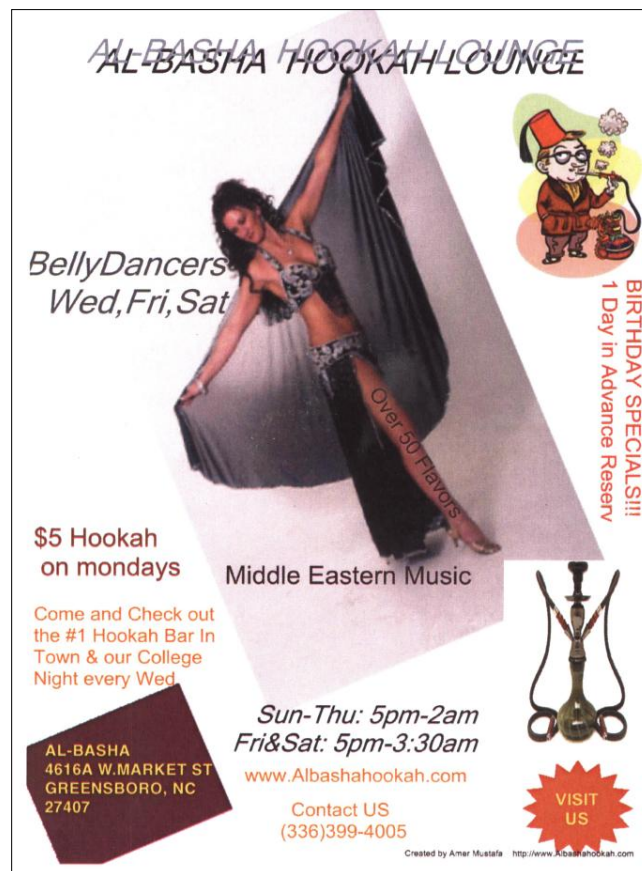


Figure 5.2 Flyer for Al-Basha Hookah Lounge

Other instances of support are apparent in the news as well. When Mekki Hamed Mekki was incarcerated for incorrect information on his visa application, forty of his Sudanese coworkers from United Yellow Cab Company came to support him in court (Banks 2002e). Two African women, including a Sudanese refugee and mother of six, started a program called African Women in Action, designed to help African immigrants find jobs, help African students to excel, and aid in the transition to American life (Firesheets 2005), another example of the African community supporting each other through bonding social capital.

5.4 Education, Work, and Housing in Guilford County

Articles in the *Greensboro News and Record* cited educational institutions attended by refugees, popular places of employment, and housing locations. Many of the articles that involved Sudanese refugees made reference to educational endeavors that they were currently pursuing or had recently achieved (Church 2004; Rowe 2008). Refugees and immigrants attended a number of colleges and universities in the area, including Greensboro College, UNC Greensboro, and High Point University (Church 2004; Rowe 2006; Schlosser 2007).

Employers mentioned in the news articles include United Yellow Cab Company, Wal-Mart, New Breed Corporation, and Marsh Furniture Company (Burchette 2005b; Schlosser 2006). Bill Baumgartner, the human resources director for Marsh Furniture Company, stated that, “[the refugees] get along with everybody...All have come in at entry-level positions and have all worked their way up into better jobs with more responsibility and

pay” (Burchette 2005b). Marsh Furniture employs around 50 Sudanese refugees and offers on-site English as a Second Language classes (Burchette 2005b).

Some news sources reveal information about the housing patterns of people in the Sudanese community. A few of the articles mentioned a region of Greensboro surrounding Colonial Apartments on West Market Street that the Sudanese community refers to as “Omdurman,” named after the cultural center of Sudan and neighboring city to the capital (Ahearn 2002). Although this neighborhood is not visibly “Sudanese” to passersby, it is located in close proximity to a number of Sudanese-owned businesses and serves as an ethnic niche for those in the North Sudanese community. Some stories mention other locations where people in the Sudanese community reside, as well, stretching through many different regions of Greensboro and High Point (Banks 2001a; Firesheets 2007; Rowe 2006). The geographic spread of refugees across the county reveals that refugees do not cluster in a single location. Aside from the Omdurman neighborhood, there is no clear pattern of clustering around cultural centers or aid organization locations (Figure 5.2).

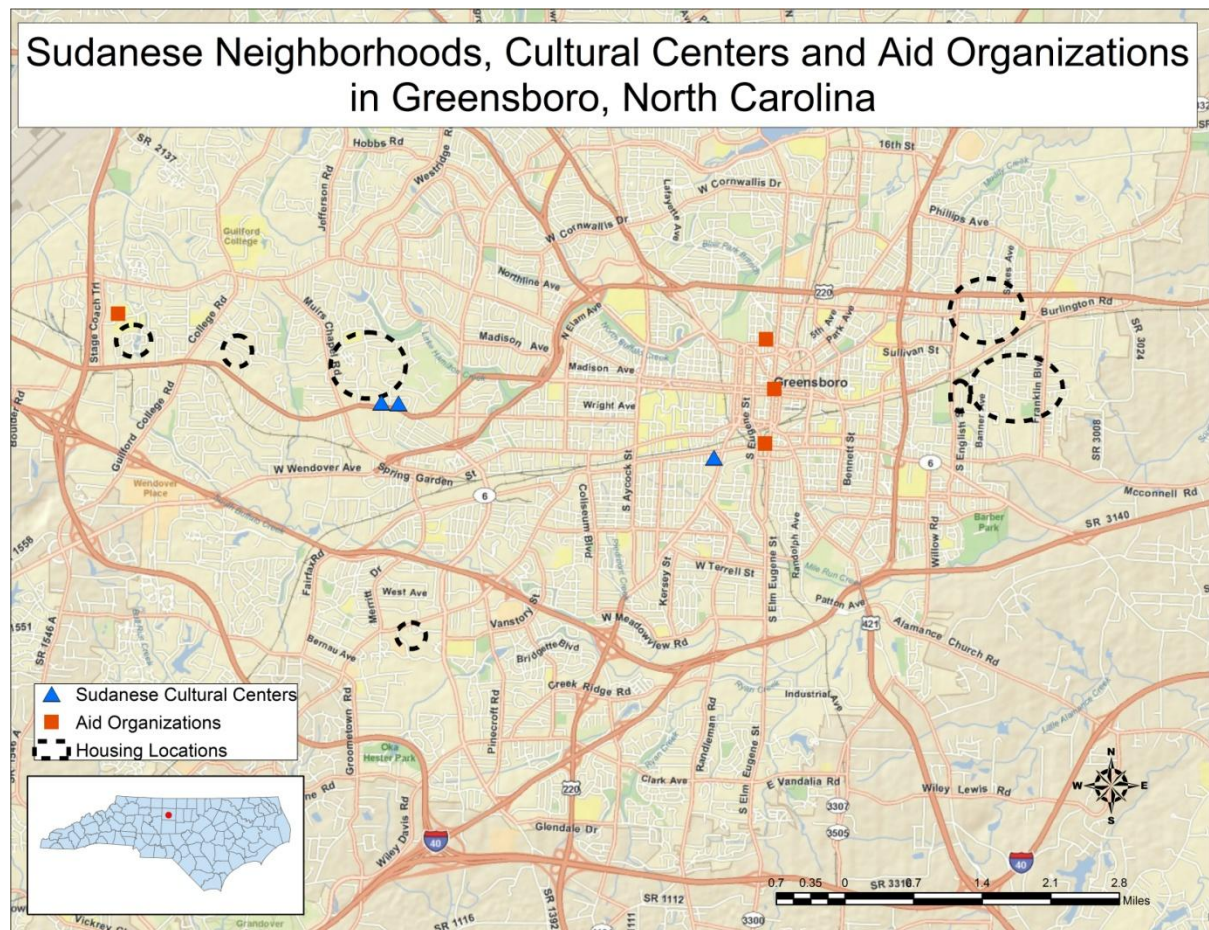


Figure 5.2 Sudanese neighborhoods, cultural centers and aid organizations in Greensboro, North Carolina

5.5 Written Representation of Different Regions of Sudan

One observation I noted in the news stories about Sudanese refugees is the difference in reports about northern Sudanese refugees from those about southern Sudanese refugees. First, many more articles pertain specifically to Sudanese refugees who have relocated from South Sudan than those from North Sudan. The articles tend to focus on the lives of the Lost Boys of Sudan, the struggles they endured to arrive in America, their attempts to reconnect with family members and help the recovery of their home villages, and their connections and successes within the community in Guilford County (Banks 2001a; Banks 2001b; Rowe 2009). In contrast, very few stories follow the lives of Sudanese from the North and their

relocation process. The majority of articles that speak distinctively about northern Sudanese mainly appeared in a series of articles that involved Mekki Hamed Mekki, the Sudanese cab driver arrested and deported in 2002 on charges of providing incorrect information on his visa application. The charge led to suspicion of connections with terrorist organizations and, consequently, had long-reaching effects, particularly on the Muslim portion of the Sudanese community (Banks 2002d; Fuchs 2002). Due to this instance, the Muslim Sudanese community is much less visible than in the past. The apartment complex referred to as “Omdurman” used to appear quite visibly African with people dressed in robes and colors representing their cultures, but now the residents are concerned for their own welfare and safety, so they stay hidden indoors (Ahearn 2002; *Winston-Salem Journal* 2002). Some women even ask their husbands to shave their beards in order to blend with American mainstream society better (Biesecker 2002). Another notable difference between the reporting about these two groups is that none of the articles I reviewed mentioned Americans helping newly settled refugees from North Sudan. One story mentions resettlement from those in the North. Omer Omer discusses a system by which the Sudanese in the community help each other, but there is no mention of outside assistance in this article (Banks 2002e).

A few articles discuss the relationship between northern Sudanese and southern Sudanese refugees. One refers to the fact that the two groups did not communicate with each other when refugees first started accumulating in Guilford County, but that they were beginning to come together for various purposes and communicate in different ways (Banks 2004). Another article discusses a peace celebration that took place after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan that both northern and southern Sudanese attended (Burchette 2005b).

5.6 Resettlement Agencies

Because of the influx of a large number of immigrants and refugees to Guilford County over the past twenty years, many services have developed to help support this growing population. In 2001, the Center for New North Carolinians opened at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Since then, this organization has been providing research and training for the government to help support this quickly growing population (Center for New North Carolinians 2010). Resettlement agencies began to appear in Greensboro about 20 years ago, as refugee resettlement searched for mid-sized cities with job opportunities and affordable housing that would accept these new residents (Cassity 2003). The agencies present within the county include North Carolina African Services Coalition, Church World Services, and World Relief of High Point. Lutheran Family Services formerly resettled refugees in the area, but they stopped accepting new refugees to this location in February 2010 (Ahearn 2010). Other programs and organizations exist within the region to assist refugees and immigrants including the Newcomers' School and FaithAction International House. Each of these organizations comes from a slightly different background and has a unique service to offer the international community in Guilford County.

World Relief of High Point is a local branch of one of the ten national resettlement agencies in the United States. In 2010, World Relief will resettle at least 425 refugees in the Greensboro-High Point area (Ahearn 2010). They are the only resettlement agency in the region with an evangelical mission. This gives them access to local churches as a financial resource, greatly aiding their ability to provide for resettled refugees (World Relief 2010). Peter Gatkouth, immigration specialist at the agency, talked with me about the services

World Relief offers. When a refugee comes to Guilford County through World Relief, the agency provides them with a number of necessities, including food for thirty days, housing, assistance in enrolling children in school, English as a Second Language courses, job opportunities, and a support system of church volunteers through which they can begin to learn about American culture. Their main goal, he said, is to help refugees become self-supporting as soon as possible (Gatkouth 2009). After being here for one year, refugees are able to apply for permanent residence. While the Office of Homeland Security pays for this process for refugees, it is very expensive for immigrants and asylees. World Relief helps refugees and immigrants through this process and aids them in applying for citizenship four years later (Gatkouth 2009).

Another important service that World Relief provides involves reunification with family members. World Relief helps refugees locate their family members and apply to resettle them in the United States. Gatkouth explained, however, that this can be incredibly complex. Oftentimes proper paperwork for documentation of relationships, such as birth and marriage certificates, are either hard to access or nonexistent. Even when all paperwork is present, the process itself sometimes takes two to three years (Gatkouth 2009). Another issue adding complications is that government agents have caught many refugees from Africa falsifying information and trying to claim non-relatives as kin in order to relocate them to the United States. In an attempt to eliminate this fraud, DNA testing is now required to prove blood relationships, only lengthening the time it takes to complete the process (Gatkouth 2009).

The North Carolina African Services Coalition (NCASC) provides services for Sudanese refugees. The NCASC is an associate organization of the Ethiopian Community

Development Council, another of the ten major resettlement agencies in the United States (Omer 2009). The organization began as eighteen smaller organizations working for African refugees and immigrants in the area. These groups came together believing that unity was the best way they could provide for the African community. Today, the organization is a federally recognized non-profit that works in both promoting rights for African immigrants and refugees and serving refugees from all over the world who resettle in Greensboro (North Carolina African Services Coalition, Inc. 2010).

In an interview with Omer Omer, the director of NCASC, I learned about the role this organization plays in refugee resettlement. Reception and placement of refugees has become the primary facet of this organization. This year, they will receive 90 refugees from all over the world. For each resettled refugee, the government provides a stipend of \$900 to allocate to the refugee over a period of six months. This stipend pays for initial settlement costs, while a caseworker assigned to the refugee helps them to find a job, sign up for social security, obtain Medicaid and food stamps, and enroll their children in school. After six months, the caseworker can offer periodic support for up to 5 years, at which time the refugee can become a United States citizen (Omer 2009). Unfortunately, the stipend from the government does not cover everything that a refugee needs. Private donations can supplement the funding, but these are becoming harder to acquire. To compensate for the lack of funding, caseworkers must take on more clients than they should, some overseeing as many as fifty clients at a time (Omer 2009). A separate government funding source provides money for a fraction of these refugees to enroll in vocational training. Because of limited money, however, only 15-20% of qualified refugees are able to take advantage of this

opportunity. Refugees chosen as benefactors for this funding are usually already proficient in English and have some schooling in their background (Omer 2009).

In addition to food and housing, Omer explained that NCASC also helps refugees find jobs. Jobs usually fall around the periphery of the city and in the industrially developed areas near the airport. Factories in this region are an optimal fit for refugees because they often come with benefits and are located on a public transportation route, providing an easy method of travel to and from work without the need for a personal vehicle. Omer talked about some difficulty in finding jobs for refugees recently, which he credited to the current economic slump. For this reason, most of the refugees that they accept in Guilford County are family reunification cases, rather than free cases, because they are not as reliant on the agency for their basic needs. He also mentioned that some employers in the past have been hesitant to hire refugees. Others, however, have had only positive things to say about the refugees they hire. Companies who hired one refugee consistently came back for more because of the quality of work they did and their general attitude while on the job. One furniture company employer commented that the Sudanese refugees he hired sang while they cut wood in the warehouse (Omer 2009). Another, and perhaps more probing, interpretation of refugees singing in the workplace may be that the practice is rooted in African culture. Ethnomusicologists point out that African communal work songs can serve to relieve the drudgery of labor, coordinate rhythmic work in groups, help pass time, and create a spirit of community (Barlow 1989).

5.7 Doris Henderson Newcomers School

The Doris Henderson Newcomers School in Greensboro is a relatively new service that aids both refugee and immigrant children in the transition into the public school system. I interviewed Jacob Henry, principal of the Newcomers School, to learn more. Although similar schools exist in different parts of the country, this particular location is unique in that it serves students from forty different nations (Henry 2009). The school began in 2007, and it has expanded each year to its present size of 200 students, ranging from grades 3 to 12. Most of the younger grades follow a self-contained classroom model, while the high school age students switch classes, similar to the other high schools in the county. Classes practice the English immersion, meaning that students only speak English in the classroom, helping them to master the language more quickly (Henry 2009).

Recommendations for students to attend the Newcomers School come from their local neighborhood schools when they first arrive in the area, says Henry. The law states that the students must attend the school voluntarily. They cannot be sent against their will or that of their parents; however, few turn down the opportunity to attend (Henry 2009). Students stay at the school for one year, focusing on learning English, American culture, and the ways of the North Carolina school system. The school offers opportunities for parents through adult literacy classes, as well as training sessions to familiarize them with educational practices in America (Doris Henderson Newcomers School 2010).

Refugee students' unique situation creates challenges that make success in the public school system difficult. They often come from circumstances in which they were fleeing intense emotional traumas, and now they face a completely new environment. Many come from locations where they received interrupted education, or none at all, and most are

illiterate upon arrival. All of these stresses have caused many to drop out, join gangs, and become juvenile delinquents. However, learning in an environment structured to meet their specific needs gives these students the encouragement they need to be more successful in local schools. One of the most important lessons the Newcomers School teaches is self-sufficiency. The school focuses on giving students enough knowledge to be able to advocate for their needs when they reach their new environments, and this confidence aids their success (Henry 2009).

The students feel enriched by their experience at this school. Not only did they seem happy and comfortable when I observed them in classroom settings, but many of the former students come back frequently to visit their teachers and encourage the current students (Henry 2009). Every year, the school puts on an International Night in which students have the chance to exhibit different elements of their own cultural background (Doris Henderson Newcomers School 2010). Numerous alumni attend this show every year (Henry 2009). One of the main attractions that this school provides is the positive attitude of faculty and students alike. The principal Jacob Henry says that interracial issues are virtually nonexistent at the Newcomers School. “There is more that unites our kids and more in common than they have differences,” he says. “They’re all new, they’ve all been through a bunch of junk in their lives, whether you’re an immigrant or a refugee. A lot of the experiences are very similar...and it is quite amazing the community they’ve created” (Henry 2009).

The school currently serves less than ten Sudanese refugees, probably because of the recent decline in direct migration from Sudan to Guilford County. Henry did mention, however, that the vast majority, if not all, of the students who came to the school from Sudan came from South Sudan. He mentioned that African refugees in the school, compared to

those from Latin America, Eastern Europe, or Asia, seemed to have seen much more violence in their past. Currently, two Sudanese students that came recently are farther behind academically than the majority of the students they have served thus far (Henry 2009). The community created at this school soon disperses to schools across the county, but, as another example of heterolocalism, these students remain in close contact with one another.

The students at the Newcomers School have the unique opportunity of being able to participate in both bonding and bridging social capital development. Their daily interaction with other refugees and immigrants with similar concerns offers them the support they need to face these challenges and develop close relationships with people to whom they can relate. These relationships also fall into the category of bridging social capital. The school serves individuals from forty different nations, so the connections they make bridge gaps between different immigrant and refugee groups, providing a wider base of support when they leave the school and begin their journeys through the public school system.

5.8 FaithAction International House

FaithAction International House serves refugees in Greensboro and High Point. A non-profit charitable organization dedicated to “cross-cultural learning, service, and advocacy,” FaithAction is dedicated to creating a community in which many cultures from all over the world are united and working together to learn from and support each other (FaithAction International House 2010). I interviewed director Mark Sills to learn about their services and connections to the international community. FaithAction began in 1997, doing cultural training and consulting, and the house was opened in 2000. They teach English, as well as other foreign language classes. They offer cultural training for

professionals like nurses and police officers who may work with various ethnic groups. FaithAction also helps individual refugees and immigrants deal with personal issues such as disagreements with landlords or employment disputes. Of the 118 nations represented in Guilford County, FaithAction International works directly with people from over fifty of these nations, mainly those from Latin America and Africa. Their goal in solving problems is empowerment, enabling immigrants and refugees to solve problems on their own. The house itself is a meeting place for a variety of different groups, including the Congolese Association, United African Sisters of North Carolina, and the Caribbean Association (Sills 2009).

FaithAction International House's addition to the international community in Guilford County is important because they are able to help people that may not be able to receive aid from the resettlement agencies. Government stipulations restrict the resettlement agencies to working with resettled refugees for a short period. After this time has expired, refugees who need assistance must find their own resources and aid. FaithAction International House offers these people a place where they can come for assistance or advice in a safe and comfortable atmosphere (Sills 2009). Many immigrants and refugees come from regions where the government and other authority figures are not trustworthy, but FaithAction has resources to overcome language barriers and has been able to build a reputation as an organization on which they can rely (Sills 2009), aiding the development of bridging social capital.

FaithAction International House also acts as an advocate for refugees and immigrants in Guilford County. Many of their programs aim towards raising awareness in the larger community of this population and the value in diversity, specifically what these people can

add to the community. Because it is a religious-affiliated organization, much of their backing comes from local places of worship. In partnership with North Carolina African Services Coalition, events throughout the year take place that involve bringing the many different ethnic groups within the community together in order to share a common experience (Sills 2009).

Of the Sudanese people that FaithAction International House serves, Mark Sills, the director, states that the population is about equal between northern and southern Sudanese. At first, they served a majority of northerners, but the number from the South has been increasing dramatically in recent years. Major differences that he sees between the populations mostly relate to educational levels. The northern population seems to have come to the United States with a broader educational background. They also tend to have traveled more and possess more worldly experiences. Sills says that the population he sees from the South comes with “a lot of life experience, a lot of skills, no shortage of wisdom, but not the academic kind of background and not the experience dealing with cultural diversity, which makes it a little harder to adjust and develop resources within your own community” (Sills 2009).

FaithAction International House offers refugees and immigrants a location through which they can build bridging social capital. The focus of this organization is to form connections between people from all over the world in an attempt to create a support system that bridges the gap between races and ethnicities. People from around the world meet here to share wisdom, learn languages, offer financial and social support, and solve problems. The collaboration of these people eases the transition into the country.

5.9 Conclusion

By exploring resources such as local newspapers and talking to individuals who work with refugees, I began to understand the basic elements of the Sudanese community. These resources also helped me see how the population of Guilford County has accepted the influx of immigrants and refugees. The foreign population is relatively new to Guilford County (Singer 2004), but many services and community members exist to help transition these new residents into their community. One positive result of these organizations is that they help new residents form bridging social capital. Because organizations like FaithAction International House involve local residents in assisting a number of different foreign populations, individuals who participate in their programs can make positive connections with people from outside of their cultural group. Programs like the Newcomers School, on the other hand, help facilitate both bridging and bonding social capital. They offer the chance for new residents to bond with each other, while also creating connections across ethnic lines.

In reviewing the newspaper articles that discuss Sudanese refugees, heterolocalism appears as a major theme. Numerous articles discuss refugees who communicate with friends and relatives in Sudan, and others reveal that the Sudanese community connects with other communities within the United States. Within the county limits, the refugees are spread across the landscape, rather than clustering in a single location to form a visible ethnic niche, but this does not inhibit the formation of a Sudanese community and the formation of bonding social capital between members of this group.

CHAPTER VI

INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SUDANESE COMMUNITY

People from different organizations that worked with the Sudanese community in Greensboro noted differences between the lives of those who came from northern Sudan to the United States and those who came from southern Sudan. I interviewed people from both regions in order to gain a firsthand perspective on the process of settling in the United States, the organization of the Sudanese community in Guilford County, and the development of social capital for each group of Sudanese. I made initial connections through contacts at the resettlement agencies, and then I used the snowball technique to make further contacts. The purpose of speaking with individuals was not to gain statistical data or make assumptions about the entire community as a whole, but to acquire personal narratives, stories and experiences about developing social capital that fit into the wider picture of this community.

6.1 The Interview Participants

Each of the Sudanese people I interviewed was a first-generation immigrant, meaning that they had been born in Sudan and currently, or recently, lived in Guilford County. For purposes of anonymity, each informant received a pseudonym in order to disguise his or her identity. The first two people I met for interviews, Deng and Yousit, were contacts I made through the resettlement agencies. Yousit, a refugee from North Sudan, put me in contact with Ahamed, who introduced me to his friend Abdelgadir, both of whom were northerners.

Deng, who is from southern Sudan, helped me contact Chol. Chol invited me to the Sudanese Community fellowship, where I met Chan, Nyamal, Nyagai, and Ochang. He also introduced me to Wani on a separate occasion. Each of these contacts came from South Sudan. I met Lagu from Darfur in Cincinnati because he was my cab driver. Lagu is the youngest of the interviewees, in his mid-twenties, who lived in Greensboro for a few years before moving to Cincinnati for school. Yousit is the oldest, in his mid-forties. All are male, except for Nyamal and Nyagai, both contacts that I met at the Sudanese Community Fellowship.

6.2 Leaving Sudan

Although some of the interview subjects left Sudan as refugees and others were political asylees, each of the people I interviewed left the country because of persecution due to the civil war and the government that was leading the country at the time of their departure. Aside from this similarity, the experience of each refugee was unique, resulting in the development of different connections and networks. Below, I provide examples from several Sudanese I interviewed.

Deng grew up as a part of the Nuer tribe in Nasir, Sudan, a small town located in Upper Nile. After getting his law degree from the University of Cairo, he returned to his hometown to practice law. The Islamic government forced every male of age to join the army fighting against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The government imprisoned anyone who refused to join the army, including Deng. Miraculously, he was able to break out of prison and flee the country, eventually arriving at a refugee camp in Kenya. He was 26 or 27 years old when he left Sudan in 1995 (Deng 2010).

Chol left his home at the much younger age of 14. Born a member of the Anuak people, a subgroup of the Nuer ethnic group, in a small town in southern Sudan, his family moved to Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile state, when he was young. In 1986 when the war intensified in the Malakal area, Chol left his family and migrated to Khartoum in search of safety and work. He stayed in Khartoum for three years, attending secondary school and working on his own before he fled the country as a refugee at age 17 (Chol 2010). Wani, from the southern state of Central Equatoria, told a similar story of fleeing to Khartoum in an effort to find solace from the fighting that raged on in the South (Wani 2010).

Some refugees from northern Sudan discussed their need to leave the country based on the government's persecution of anyone who was not a direct supporter of their policies. Abdelgadir, a man from Khartoum, felt pressure to leave the country quickly along with his father because his father was a professor (Abdelgadir 2010). Ahamed from Khartoum, on the other hand, mentioned his good fortune in earning a diversity visa, which allowed him to study in New Delhi, India at age 19 in 1993. However, as violence in his hometown escalated, he was unable to return, and he had to find a new place to go (Ahamed 2010).

6.3 Journey to the United States

Although they followed many different paths to get to the United States, only one informant came straight from Sudan. Each one lived in a different part of the world before arriving on American soil. As mentioned before, Ahamed went first to India on a diversity visa. When he was ready to leave India, however, he was unable to return to Sudan because of the war, so he applied for refugee status and was able to relocate to the United States in March of 2002 (Ahamed 2010). One refugee from North Sudan named Yousit went first to

Egypt where he applied for refugee status and resettled to the United Kingdom. Then, he later immigrated to the United States as a student at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. Hussein, another northern Sudanese refugee, went first to Gambia for a few years, then to Egypt, and then to the United States (Yousit 2009). Abdelgadir, the one person with whom I spoke who migrated directly from Sudan, came as a political asylee and earned his green card after arriving in the United States (Abdelgadir 2010).

Those who came from southern Sudan had similar stories of living in multiple countries prior to arriving in the United States. Chan told the story of living in a refugee camp in Kenya and then resettling to Australia, where he lived for ten years before the United States government allowed him to relocate to his wife's home in Guilford County (Chan 2010). Deng, who also lived in a refugee camp in Kenya, relocated to the United States after five years in this camp because others in the camp were threatening his life, and the UNHCR was unable to keep him safe within the camp (Deng 2010).

Chol, a southern refugee, relocated from Sudan to Moscow, Russia in September 1990, where he lived for twelve years before relocating to the United States. Although very few Sudanese refugees were resettled in Russia (there were only 32 in the entire country when he left), he was offered a number of opportunities that helped him to excel, including the opportunity to earn his Master's and Doctoral degrees in Veterinary Medicine. Chol received the opportunity to witness the historic fall of the Soviet Union and the change of the country from communism to free markets. Unfortunately, Russian refugee resettlement laws only allowed refugees to study in the country; they could not hold jobs and collect wages, so he eventually relocated to the United States in November 2002 (Chol 2010).

6.4 Arrival in Guilford County

Arriving in the United States, only about a quarter of the people interviewed came directly to Guilford County. Apart from Yousit, who came specifically to earn a degree at University of North Carolina in Greensboro, one of the resettlement agencies in Guilford County sponsored the refugees who came directly to the area. With that same exception, those who came directly originated from southern Sudan and arrived in the area between 2000 and 2002. The resettlement agency assisted them in all of their needs, including finding an apartment for them and helping them find a job. Deng stated that because he did not know anyone else in the United States, the resettlement agency placed him in an apartment with three other refugees with whom he had travelled to the United States (Deng 2010). Most refugees agreed that the living arrangements were adequate, and most appreciated the help offered from the resettlement agency, but the refugees seemed to move to new locations as soon as they could afford to do so. They did not feel obligated to stay near one another, which displays that moving to new locations did not threaten their ability to maintain ethnic associations across longer distances.

The rest of the refugees made the decision to move from where they initially settled in the United States to Guilford County for various reasons. Abdelgadir said that he came to New York City first because he had relatives there. After only three weeks in the country, however, he chose to move in with a friend who lived in Greensboro and could help him with the process of applying for asylum. Moving to Greensboro was a very beneficial experience for him, however, because it was not as large or as crowded as New York, so it was easier for him to “learn the system.” He also commented on the milder winters and the fact that less

diversity in Greensboro made it easier for him to learn about American culture (Abdelgadir 2010).

Ahamed resettled first to Kentucky through Lutheran Family Services (LFS). Because they could not find him a job there, however, he relocated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where his cousins lived. LFS transferred his case to their Milwaukee branch, and he stayed there for three years before finally deciding to relocate to Greensboro. He says that he visited some family members in Greensboro and really liked it, so he decided to move there permanently. Greensboro, according to Ahmed, was quiet and warmer than Milwaukee, and the sizeable Sudanese community was a major benefit to his career as a barber, for which he relied heavily on building bonding social capital (Ahmed 2010).

Refugees from South Sudan told similar stories. Wani said that he and his wife moved their four kids from Mobile, Alabama, where they originally resettled, because of the things they had heard about the strength of the Sudanese community in Greensboro (Wani 2010). Nyamal, a southern Sudanese woman, talked of relocating her family from Orange County, California because the community was more unified than other Sudanese communities in the United States were. She said that people of all different tribes accepted one another in this community and that it did not matter what ethnic background people were; the Sudanese people came together and supported one another in a way that she had not seen in other places (Nyamal 2010). Ochang mentioned relocating to Greensboro because of jobs (Ochang 2010), while Chan moved because his wife had resettled there (Chan 2010). Family reunification has also brought a number of refugees to the area, including Abdelgadir's father and brother (Abdelgadir 2010). Chol talked about how peaceful the community is, and that not every Sudanese community is like this one. He said, "Everyone

would like to have this kind of community to live around, especially those with families” (Choi 2010).

All three of the refugees interviewed from the North lived in Greensboro. Six refugees I interviewed from southern Sudan lived in or near High Point, while one lives in Raleigh and another has relocated to Cincinnati. This pattern relates to the contacts these individuals had when they initially resettled to the area. While World Relief, a Christian resettlement organization located in High Point, helped bring a large number of southern Sudanese to the area, their apartment complexes and contacts remained close to High Point. Consequently, those refugees who migrated to the area from other locations came first to High Point where their relatives and friends from southern Sudan lived (Omer 2009). Individuals interviewed from northern Sudan followed a similar pattern. Those who came first settled in Greensboro because the organizations that brought them were located in Greensboro, while those who came later followed the patterns of their friends and relatives.

6.5 Connections

As a result of extensive travel before reaching their destination, refugees have made connections with people all over the United States and the world. This tends to be true for people from both North and South Sudan, and it supports Zelinsky and Lee’s theory of heterolocalism (1998). Refugees mentioned having friends and family members from Sudan that lived in various cities such as Washington, D.C.; Nashville, Tennessee; Phoenix, Arizona; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Cincinnati, Ohio; Boston, Massachusetts; Springfield, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Atlanta, Georgia. Beyond the United States, refugees mentioned friends and relatives in countries such as Canada, Australia, Egypt,

Russia, India and the United Kingdom with whom they correspond regularly. Some of these people are ones they have met on their journeys from Sudan to the United States, and others are people they knew before they left Sudan. Some refugees mention friends they met when they were in the refugee camps with whom they still keep in close contact because of the similar experiences they had. Deng talked at length about how important friendships with other Sudanese are to him. He talked about how his American friends are incredibly important to him, but that his Sudanese friends understand his past and what he has experienced, and it is important for him to be able to remember these things with fellow survivors (Deng 2010).

While having connections with people all over the world can be a positive experience, the process also results in the dispersion of refugee families across the globe. Chol said he had six brothers and three sisters: one in Atlanta, one in Australia, and the rest in Sudan. “See how the world scatters people?” he lamented. Because of the circumstances with the war, he was unable to communicate with his family for a period of many years. Some lived in Khartoum, and he could ask those family members how the others were doing, but he could not directly communicate with those in his hometown. He was not able to return home for a visit until 2009, over two decades after he first left his town. By this time, Chol’s father had passed away without ever seeing him as an adult (Chol 2010). Abdelgadir spoke of how his father and brother were able to come to Greensboro through the Family Reunification program. He currently lives with both of them; however, his mother is still in Khartoum, but she will be able to come when his father receives his citizenship next February. Fortunately, he is able to speak with her on the phone every weekend (Abdelgadir 2010).

Refugees from various communities around the United States gather for certain events throughout the year. Some Sudanese mentioned holidays for which many will gather from various communities. Normally, they gather in regional groups; however, they will sometimes attend national events. Christmas and Easter are times when Sudanese, particularly those who are Christian from the South, will travel to be with people from other communities (Ahamed 2010). The Sudanese Community Fellowship hosts a large potluck that usually draws people from as far away as Atlanta and Washington, D.C. (Chol 2010). When refugees and immigrants do visit other Sudanese communities, according to Ahamed, they never stay in hotels. It is part of the culture to invite other Sudanese into their home to stay with them. Aside from holidays, Sudanese will travel to other communities for such events as weddings, funerals, or even sports tournaments (Ahamed 2010).

While most of the refugees I interviewed were now able to communicate frequently with their friends and relatives back in Sudan, only half of them had been able to make trips back home to visit. Deng has been back to visit his hometown in South Sudan three times: in 2006, 2007, and 2008. As mentioned before, Chol was able to visit his family for the first time in 2009 (Chol 2010). Conversely, neither Ahamed nor Abdelgadir from the North have been able to go back to visit, stating time, money, and the political situation as factors keeping them from doing so (Abdelgadir 2010; Ahamed 2010).

6.6 Finding Work

When refugees first enter the United States, the resettlement agency assigned to their case does a great deal to find them jobs that will enable them to become self-sufficient quickly. For the Sudanese refugees who came straight to Guilford County through a

resettlement agency, they were able to find jobs, although their initial work was often below their skill level. Deng, who was formerly a lawyer in Sudan, got a job in a manufacturing company cutting wood for hardwood floors, cabinets, and other furniture. There were many other African and Sudanese refugees and immigrants working at this same company, giving him the chance to communicate with others and develop a social network. He was able to support himself, but the twelve-hour shifts made it difficult for him to go to school, a necessary requirement for making himself qualified for a better job. After six months, he decided to look for a new job that would give him more opportunities to further his education. The resettlement agency through which he found the job originally decided to hire him, giving him the opportunity to work a normal 8-hour shift and still have time to attend classes in the evening. He has retained this job for almost ten years (Deng 2010).

When Chol first arrived in Guilford County, he already held a veterinary degree from Russia. In order to help him make the connections he would need to establish himself as a veterinarian in the United States, his resettlement agency found him a job as a veterinary technician at the Guilford County Animal Shelter. The hourly wage was low, but he was able to make friends and meet veterinarians, and create the connections he needed in order to find his way into a better job. He also used this time to learn about differences in veterinary practices in the United States, which helped him to pass the test required to transfer his licenses (Chol 2010).

Those refugees and immigrants who came to Guilford County without the assistance of a resettlement agency had no help in finding a job for themselves. Most found work through friends in the Sudanese community. Ahamed, a barber in Milwaukee, hoped that the large Sudanese community in Greensboro would offer him a strong customer base when he

moved. Upon arrival, however, he had trouble transferring his business license, so he drove taxis and cut hair for friends while he established himself in the area. The taxi-driving job was helpful, he said, because he was able to learn his way around the area and meet people. Then he decided to open a clothing store that sold Islamic clothing, which he ran for two years. Next, he changed his business into a coffee shop where people in the Sudanese and other Arabic communities could come to socialize. The shop is still open today and offers a number of services, including a money transfer station, where members of the Sudanese community can send money back to their families in Sudan. The coffee shop attracts people from as far away as Charlotte because of the unique atmosphere that it offers. People gather to discuss sports, politics, and other issues in a comfortable atmosphere with other people who are dealing with similar concerns in their own lives. More than just Sudanese people frequent the shop; there are customers who moved to the area from other Muslim countries like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as well (Ahamed 2010).

Abdelgadir first got a job in a pizza restaurant when he moved to Greensboro. A Sudanese man owned the restaurant, so he was able to learn the menu and cook in Arabic, as well as communicate with his manager in Arabic, meanwhile learning English from the English-speaking employees. He worked there for two years until he felt comfortable with the language and the culture. In 2004, he got a job working for Endura Products, a wood products manufacturer, as a machine operator. This job paid very well and he liked it, but it was difficult to work the long hours required of this job and attend school at the same time. After six months at Endura Products, Abdelgadir decided to go back to the pizza restaurant and work as a delivery clerk, where he could work and go to school comfortably at the same time (Abdelgadir 2010).

There is a wide range of job success among the refugees I interviewed. While some, like Deng and Chol, have been able to maintain well-paying jobs for a long period, others are having trouble finding and keeping jobs. Chan arrived here three months ago from Australia, where he worked as a minister of education in the Australian Assembly of God church. His wife is a nurse's assistant, so she is able to help support him, but he has not been able to find a job yet (Chan 2010). When Wani first arrived, he got a job at Wal-Mart, but the job did not pay well, was not enjoyable, and it did not offer benefits. He was able to find a new job at a furniture store, where he worked until six months ago, when the company laid him off. Since then, he has been unable to find anything (Wani 2010). Chol observed that not as many people are moving to Greensboro as he had seen in the past, mainly because of the economic crisis and loss of jobs. In fact, he observed that many are leaving to go to places where they are still able to get jobs (Chol 2010). Nyamal moved to Raleigh, for instance, where she and her husband were able to get jobs and she could continue working on her accounting degree (Nyamal 2010).

The resettlement agencies were a helpful resource for many of the refugees I interviewed; however, they were not able to provide jobs for everyone. Some people, such as Chan and Abdelgadir, did not qualify for refugee services because they did not officially hold refugee status. Consequently, they had to look for jobs through their own connections (Abdelgadir 2010; Chan 2010). Ahamed had trouble because the resettlement agency in Wisconsin was unable to find him a job, so he had to find a way to make a living on his own (Ahamed 2010). Refugees reported that many of the jobs the resettlement agencies found for them were not ones that they would have chosen, but they realized that, "you must take

whatever job you can get and then later work on a degree” (Deng 2010). The goal was to become self-sufficient first and then find a way to get a job that they would prefer.

Jobs provide an important means through which refugees could develop social networks and can result in the development of both bonding and bridging social capital. Deng met a number of other Sudanese refugees at his first manufacturing job because the company hired so many refugees from the resettlement agency (Deng 2010). Abdelgadir said that as many as sixty of his fellow employees at his company were Sudanese, and even more were Somalis and other African immigrants. This was helpful because he had direct contact with others who spoke Arabic, but it also was convenient because the refugees would carpool to work together (Abdelgadir 2010).

6.7 Education

Many of the refugees I interviewed held advanced degrees before they arrived in the United States. Deng, for example, had received a Law Degree from the University of Cairo and had been a practicing lawyer in Sudan for over a year before he had to leave the country (Deng 2010). Ahamed spent seven years in India studying Travel and Tourism (Ahamed 2010). Abdelgadir was attending the School of Medicine in Khartoum, and Chol received his Masters’ and PhD. in Veterinary Science from an institution in Russia (Abdelgadir 2010; Chol 2010). Hussein received his Master’s degree in the United Kingdom and returned to Khartoum to work for over a decade before leaving Sudan (Abdelgadir 2010).

All of the people I interviewed were fluent in English and at least one other language. Most schools in southern Sudan teach English in either primary or secondary school. Those in the Sudanese state of Equatoria learn English in primary school and later learn Arabic,

while those in other parts of southern Sudan learn Arabic first and English in secondary school. Most come into school already fluent in their own ethnic group's language, so they are trilingual by the time they graduate. Wani, a native of Equatoria, speaks Bari (his native language), English, Arabic, and some Swahili that he learned in the refugee camp in Kenya (Wani 2010). On top of speaking English, Arabic, and Anuak fluently, Chol also speaks Russian because of his time spent in Moscow as a refugee (Chol 2010). Those who came from the North, however, did not all learn English in school. Ahamed learned English during his first few years in India (Ahamed 2010), while Abdelgadir did not learn English until he moved to the United States (Abdelgadir 2010).

Unfortunately, very few of these degrees were easily transferrable to a comparable degree in the United States. Complicating the issue is that most of these refugees must earn their own money for tuition in order to pay for education that will enable them to be qualified to hold the same positions they held in Sudan. Deng's law degree did not transfer to the United States, so he had to go to a community college to earn a paralegal degree and work as a paralegal before he was qualified to attend a law school in the United States. Some of his classes will transfer, so he will not have to take as many years of law school, but he will still need to attend for a few years to earn his degree. He was lucky, in that his church in High Point was able to give him a full scholarship to attend college, so he was able to finish his paralegal training in a little over two years (Deng 2010). Chol, on the other hand, was able to spend time in his job learning about the major differences between veterinary practices in the United States and those in Russia, where he received his schooling. This proved to be quite helpful because he was able to pass the veterinary exam without any formal schooling in the United States (Chol 2010).

Some refugees chose to change their career paths based on the educational opportunities available to them in Guilford County. Ahamed had trouble finding a Master's Program similar to the Travel and Tourism Program he had completed in India. Instead, he decided to get his entrepreneurial license and open his own business establishment (Ahamed 2010). Abdelgadir started taking English classes at Guilford County Community College as soon as he arrived in the area. Rather than pursuing his medical degree that he started in Sudan, he began an engineering program at North Carolina A&T State University, hoping to obtain a degree in Biological Engineering. He was able to receive a scholarship that pays for some of his education, but he also collects financial aid to pay for his schooling (Abdelgadir 2010).

6.8 Role of Religion in Bridging and Bonding Social Capital Development

Religion plays an important role in the lives of all the refugees I interviewed. Not only do religious institutions offer refugees spiritual solace, but they also provide an important center for socialization and networking. The main gathering places for the Sudanese are the churches and the mosques (Wani 2010). Because their weeks are so busy with work and school, most refugees I interviewed said that they preserved their day of worship as a time when they could spend hours socializing with others and gathering for meals and events, in addition to the actual religious service. Thus, these services served as an excellent source of bridging and bonding social capital development.

In addition to help with housing and jobs, the Sudanese refugees who resettled through World Relief received the added bonus of the agency's assistance in finding them an American church to attend. Refugees belong to a wide variety of churches in the Greensboro

and High Point area, giving them the opportunity to meet and network with Americans more frequently, developing bridging social capital through which they can connect to a wider base of individuals in the community. Deng belongs to a small church attended by only two or three other refugees from other parts of the world. He sees his American church as his “American family.” They have been a positive source of bridging social capital for him, helping him find jobs, pay for school, and make connections in the community (Deng 2010). Chol says that Sudanese Christians attend a wide array of churches across Guilford County. They attend their own churches in the morning, and then they go to Grace Community Church in the afternoon (Chol 2010).

Every Sunday afternoon, a large group of Sudanese Christians in Guilford County gathers at Grace Community Church in Greensboro for Sudanese Community Fellowship. Over 120 Sudanese men, women, and children gather in a small room at the church and sing songs in both Arabic and English, listen to inspiring messages about their community and their homeland, pray for their families and their country, and socialize with each other. The group has been meeting every Sunday afternoon since 2004. The members predominantly consist of people from South Sudan. “If there was a Christian from the North, I think they can come, too,” says Chol (2010). Some come from as far as Raleigh to attend the service because of the opportunity it offers for bonding social capital development through communication with others from a similar background that are facing similar issues. “It makes a difference when you pray in your language,” says Deng (2010).

For Muslims from Sudan, Friday is the day of gathering in Greensboro. Those from North Sudan attend one of two mosques in the city. Prayer services are widely attended, and “many times it is the only time we will see each other all week,” says Abdelgadir (2010). It is

an important time for socialization and bonding social capital development, asking about each other's lives, and making plans for parties and get-togethers. Abdelgadir says that he will often go to the mosque multiple times during the week in order to help with different activities (Abdelgadir 2010). Even though there are two separate mosques, the people in the North connect with each other regularly, and there is communication between the mosques (Ahamed 2010). Because the service times are different, attendees will go to the service that best fits their schedule. Abdelgadir says that he switches mosques each semester depending on his class schedule (Abdelgadir 2010).

Because these religious services are the main area of socializing and communication, some of the refugees I interviewed expressed that the Muslim Sudanese and Christian Sudanese in Guilford County could be more connected than they are. Ahamed stated that they would gather for events such as weddings, but that aside from special events, he does not see people from South Sudan very often because most of his social events involve the mosque (Ahamed 2010). Wani observed a definite split in the community. He said that the split was not along North/South lines, however, but rather along Christian/Muslim lines. He made it clear that it was not a contentious split, but simply a lack of communication. He said that communication would be positive between these two groups, but they just did not communicate. The only place where these two groups sometimes overlapped was in the workplace (Wani 2010).

6.9 Sudanese Community

Guilford County is the home of the largest group of Sudanese people in the state of North Carolina. Despite the size of the population, however, developing a sense of unity does

not come without effort. Most of the refugees who arrive in the area are starting over with little or nothing, and have to put great effort into finding work and educating themselves, leaving little time for community development activities. Chol says, “Where they were, they were physicians, engineers...they come here because of their positions and ages, and they have to do manual labor to survive” (Chol 2010). These changes can be traumatic, so becoming a part of a community from which you can draw support becomes crucial, and it is not always easy. Due to various factors like the resettlement agencies and chain migration, the different Sudanese groups develop in separate geographic locations in Guilford County, as well. The apartments in the West Market neighborhood are mainly Muslim, while the apartments in High Point are mostly Christian (Chol 2010).

The southern Sudanese community attracted people who came to the area because its reputation of being very welcoming and accepting (Ochang 2010). A common practice of Christianity and the common experience of being refugees bridge tribal boundaries (Nyamal 2010). Because of the closeness of the group and strong bonding social capital, new arrivals are able to make friends and find jobs more easily (Chol 2010). Wani said, however, that they do not usually see people from the North, unless it happens to be at a special event such as a wedding, or if they happen to work in the same location (Wani 2010).

The northern Sudanese community in Greensboro is somewhat larger than that of the South. In addition to gathering at the mosque, Sudanese refugees frequent other public places, helping to establish their sense of community in the area. A sub shop, a coffee shop, and a pizza restaurant are all Sudanese-owned and run, and their patrons are often Sudanese and other Arab immigrants. These places offer the Sudanese a location where they can get together to relax with one another, socialize and network, instilling a sense of unity among

them. In addition to these locations, many of the northern Sudanese participate in a soccer league (Ahamed 2010).

The problems that existed between the North and the South, however, do not seem to formulate in the relationship between those from these two regions once they migrate to the United States. Ahamed says, “People come together in the New World...underneath, I don’t know what’s going on” (Ahamed 2010). Abdelgadir observed that, “The problems in Sudan are reflected here, but there is no strong result of it,” meaning that people may disagree about politics and solutions for the problems in Sudan, but they have no power to make changes, so they do not make too much of an issue out of it (Abdelgadir 2010).

Despite their different cultural and religious backgrounds, both groups struggle with the same transitional difficulties and must find a way to adapt in their new surroundings. “Being transformed from a warfare situation to a peaceful situation, some have never seen peace. They come here trying to learn what peace is” (Chol 2010). Deng says that he relies on his friends from Sudan to support him because they have had similar struggles and can relate (Deng 2010). Life is not easy for anyone in this situation, but the support of the Sudanese community helps them succeed in this endeavor together.

6.10 Connections across Cultural Lines

The communication between Sudanese refugees I interviewed and people of other cultures seems to vary considerably. Deng says that he probably communicates more with Sudanese people than with Americans, but that his relationship with Americans is still very important to him. His connections with Americans mainly consist of people from his American church. “My connections with Americans [are] very important to me because they

[have] become a [close] friend to me. They become a part of my life. They become part of my family...If I have any needs, financially, something like that, they can pray for me. It's very important to me" (Deng 2010).

Chol says that the majority of the people he communicates with are Americans. He does not work with any other Sudanese people, and his church on Sunday morning does not have very many Sudanese members. On the weekends, however, he sees more people that are Sudanese at social events and at the Sudanese Community Fellowship. He feels that he is well established in a career and fully self-sufficient, but he has friendships with Americans and Sudanese alike (Chol 2010).

Ahamed says that 90% of the people with whom he communicates are Sudanese. They are people from all over, mainly coming to transfer money or get coffee at his shop. At another bar and restaurant where he spends time, around 75% of the patrons are Sudanese, and the rest are from other foreign cultures. He rarely interacts with Americans. Ahamed says that he wishes more Americans came to his coffee shop, but unfortunately, most of them go to other shops around Greensboro (Ahamed 2010).

Abdelgadir says that the majority of the people he communicates with on a regular basis are also Sudanese. He says that the people he communicates with who are not Sudanese are people of varied cultural backgrounds, and they are mainly people from his classes at school. He has classmates from places like Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Burkina Faso. There is no one from Sudan in his major, but outside of class, he spends the most time with Sudanese people. When asked which people he is most likely to turn to for help, he said that the most helpful group to him is the African community. He said that it

is easier to ask them for help because they speak his language and they are more familiar with his situation (Abdelgadir 2010).

The relationship with Americans seems to be mostly positive. When refugees come straight to Guilford County from other countries, American contacts through the resettlement agency prove to be important. Chol found that they were helpful with not only the initial duties of finding a job and social services, but Americans were also helpful in terms of learning the culture and places to socialize within the community. The only major problem he expressed involved understanding southern accents. “You have to ask ‘what?’ twice before you can get it!” (Chol 2010). Abdelgadir learned some English and a lot about American culture from his American co-workers when he was working at the pizza restaurant (Abdelgadir 2010).

Ahamed felt that there was a separation between the American and Sudanese communities. He observed that they were completely separate groups that rarely overlapped. The one place where he did see an overlap was in sports. American teams play against their Sudanese soccer team, and they have a good relationship on the field (Ahamed 2010). Chol also observed that there were often cultural misunderstandings that would cause people to get upset. He also said, however, that this could change with time and more familiarity with the different cultures. This seemed to be improving throughout the community, he said. “People are getting more mature in that field, starting to learn what the differences are, how to approach people” (Chol 2010).

6.11 Planning for the Future

When asked about plans for the future, each of the refugees had an idea about how they wanted to spend their lives. Some were interested in returning to Sudan, while others felt more comfortable staying in the United States. Some wanted new careers, while others were happier where they were.

Deng expressed hope for his future over the next few years. He was sure that God had good plans for him, whether that meant staying in the United States or returning home. He wanted to study law in the United States and help the Sudanese community in Guilford County to grow and prosper, but also to remember their lives and their culture from home. “My heart is still there in Sudan,” he said. He felt that his country needed him in Sudan, but that he was not yet sure how God would use him there. For now, he said that he was quite happy in the United States (Deng 2010).

Ahamed planned to continue his education as much as he could. He called education a “strong weapon,” and stated that even back in Sudan, his initial degree would not get him a good job, and he wished to earn a higher degree. For the present, he was happy staying in Greensboro, but he wished he could at least visit Sudan from time to time. His ultimate goal was to find a job and a way to return to Sudan. “That’s my plan, but they’re just plans, you know” (Ahamed 2010).

Abdelgadir hoped to earn his engineering degree, and then go on to earn a Master’s and a Doctoral degree in a similar field. He would like to finish his degree in Biological Engineering in the United States and then return one day to Sudan and use his education to make positive changes there. “Sudan is especially the sort of country who is rich with those problems. Pollution is all over the place. Disease is all over the place. It’s a place where this

knowledge I got [I] will take advantage of”. Right now, however, the political situation is preventing him from returning to help in the country. In the meantime, he wishes that his family could reunite in Greensboro (Abdelgadir 2010).

Chol seems very happy with his life and his career in High Point. He says that as long as his job continues to remain stable, he does not see a reason to move at all. Being a refugee, he says, you become tired and eventually, you have to settle. “The situation in Sudan is far from peaceful, so what would you do to help them? I don’t know at this point.” Chol does not have a desire to return permanently to Sudan and live (Chol 2010).

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Social capital, as defined in Chapter 3, involves a person's ability to secure certain benefits by involvement and participation in various social networks and structures (Portes 1998). Specific benefits that social capital can help a person to secure include jobs, housing arrangements, educational opportunities, and informal support systems. The development of social capital directly affects the success of a person in a given place. In addition, the type of social capital they develop, either bridging or bonding, affects their success. Without the proper networks through which to secure these benefits, survival becomes significantly more difficult.

The unique situation in which resettled refugees find themselves in the United States means that their formation of social capital is different from people who were born here and from people who came as immigrants. They do not choose where they live when they first enter the country, and their initial connections are chosen for them. In essence, government and non-profit organizations engineer their initial social capital. Then, they must use their own strategies to create connections and find long-term success in this country.

The refugee experience can be different for each refugee. Resettlement agencies vary on their success rate in helping refugees become self-sufficient (Mott 2010). Individuals that come to the United States through different government programs have varying experiences. For instance, those who arrive through the Family Reunification Program come to the United

States with connections already in place, while those who come through Priority One, as a specific recommendation of a humanitarian agency, do not always know anyone in the country prior to arrival (Singer and Wilson 2006). The community within which refugees resettle can also have either a positive or a negative effect on their experience and their development of social capital. If they arrive in a community that is ill equipped to handle foreign populations or if their community is not as accepting of these groups, it can create additional challenges for refugees.

In Guilford County, North Carolina, these differences are noticeable in subtle ways, even when comparing the experiences of Sudanese resettled refugees from North Sudan and those from South Sudan. Although these two groups of refugees come from the same country and are fleeing the same oppressive government, the experiences that led to their arrival in Guilford County and their development of social capital once here are somewhat different, particularly in the type of social capital that each group develops. This dissimilarity can be credited to a variety of factors, including different cultures, religions and connections made within the United States.

7.1 Bonding Social Capital in North Sudanese Refugees

The development of social capital for people from North Sudan who now live in Guilford County seems to follow certain patterns, based on their initial contacts in the area and their activities and habits living in Guilford County. Upon initial entry into the area, this group seems to depend primarily on other Sudanese refugees who have come before them to provide them with the contacts and information networks that they need in order to find a job, secure a place to live, and settle into society. Both Omer Omer of African Services

Coalition and Ahamed mentioned a system through which the Sudanese offer considerable assistance to newly arrived members of the community in order to help them become self-sufficient (Ahamed 2010; Banks 2002e). This pattern clearly shows that northern Sudanese refugees develop a strong network of bonding social capital as soon as they arrive in Guilford County. Ahamed also made specific mention that those members of the Sudanese community who came from the North are not likely to be reliant on VOLAGs and resettlement agencies for very long. They receive more help from members of the Sudanese community to secure jobs and fill other needs (Ahamed 2010). VOLAGs did play an important role in the physical settlement process of the community. Initial resettlement of Sudanese refugees from the North took place primarily in Greensboro, rather than High Point. This led secondary migrants to settle in Greensboro, also, creating a large group in this area (Omer 2009). Many came to the same area of town as well, an area surrounding the Colonial Apartments in West Market that earned the nickname “Omdurman” (Ahearn 2002).

Religion seems to play a very strong role in the development of social capital and networking that occurs between people from North Sudan. The large majority of the northern Sudanese community practices Islam, and they attend two mosques in Greensboro (Abdelgadir 2010). The mosque offers a place for them to practice their religion and a gathering place. According to Abdelgadir, most social events that take place within the Sudanese community relate to the mosque in one way or another (Abdelgadir 2010). The mosque serves as an important information-gathering locale, as well as a networking web that links people to jobs, housing opportunities, and other benefits. Development of bonding social capital among Sudanese refugees occurs heavily here, as well as bridging social capital

with other Muslims that are outside of the Sudanese community who attend the mosques (Abdelgadir 2010).

Other northern Sudanese refugees who rely on and interact with their own group are those who are associated with the coffee shops and restaurants run and frequented almost exclusively by northern Sudanese refugees and immigrants (Ahamed 2010). This pattern suggests a strong base of bonding social capital, but weaker instances of bridging social capital. These establishments also offer an example of bounded solidarity, showing loyalty to the employment of one's own cultural group by employing and serving mainly northern Sudanese and other Arab refugees and immigrants (Portes 1998; Abdelgadir 2010).

7.2 Bridging Social Capital in South Sudanese Refugees

Those refugees who come to Guilford County from South Sudan also follow certain patterns in their development of social capital in the area. Initial contacts for the people of South Sudan vary depending on those who have come through refugee resettlement VOLAGs and those who have arrived through secondary migration. For people who arrived in Guilford County with the help of a refugee resettlement agency, the agency provided for the majority of their needs upon arrival, including housing, job seeking, and applying for benefits like social security and language classes. Some received assistance in finding churches to join and schools to attend. The resettlement agencies also played a key role in the geographic dispersal of this population, which resulted in a pattern of southern Sudanese refugees residing mainly in High Point. World Relief, the resettlement agency that is located there, is an evangelical Christian VOLAG, and most Sudanese refugees who came through this VOLAG were Christians from South Sudan. Later, a number of South Sudanese refugees

moved to the area after initial resettlement in other parts of the country. These refugees relied much more heavily on their Sudanese community to help them find jobs, schools, and other benefits within the area because they were not eligible for VOLAG benefits.

Religion plays a key role in the development of social capital for southern Sudanese refugees in this area. The vast majority of southern Sudanese refugees are Christian, and they attend a wide variety of Christian churches in Greensboro and High Point. Many refugees I interviewed stated that they were one of just a few other refugees who attended their church and implied that refugees are attending many different churches in the area. This process creates bridging social capital, a situation in which refugees have contacts and networks that involve people outside of their community. These networks offer a wider array of benefits than they might not have if they were only in contact with people from their community. These benefits can be social, educational, or financial. Refugees have not only referred to people at their American churches as a part of their family, but they have discussed scholarships to school and job networking benefits that they acquired through their churches. These contacts can be especially helpful to secondary migrants who lack the benefits provided by a VOLAG.

The Sudanese Community Fellowship is another means through which religion offers the southern Sudanese people a chance to develop social capital. Over one hundred members of the Sudanese community attend this service weekly, offering them an opportunity to develop bonding social capital. After a Christian church service held in both English and Arabic, members of the community have time to visit, learn about news in one another's lives, and find out about opportunities to help each other succeed. The service takes place on Sunday afternoons, giving members of the group a chance to attend their own local services

before attending this one. The design of the service allows the participants to spend their day making connections with people from outside of their community in the mornings, through bridging social capital, and then make connections with those within their communities in the afternoons.

7.3 Comparison of Experiences

When comparing the development of social capital in people from North Sudan with those from South Sudan, a few major differences become apparent. One of the most obvious differences is the effect that their religions have on resettlement and the social connections that they are able to make through different religious networks. While the people of South Sudan attend a variety of different Christian churches where they socialize with many different people outside of their cultural group, the people of North Sudan attend only two different mosques in Guilford County (Abdelgadir 2010). This limits their access to networking opportunities and inhibits their ability to make as many valuable connections with people in the community. In contrast, this lack of many different religious centers helps to congeal the northern community. While the South Sudanese have created a separate service in order to gather their members together, the people in the North feel no obligation to do so because their regular religious gathering fulfills their need for a source of bonding social capital development. One reason for this difference is simply due to the religious opportunities that were already available in this region. While a large portion of the population in Guilford County attends Christian churches and services, the population that attends Muslim religious centers is much smaller, so the choices for services to attend are fewer for Muslim refugees from Sudan.

Another noticeable difference between the populations from the North and those from the South is the type of social capital that each has developed. Refugees from North Sudan generally seem to develop more bonding social capital, while those from the South seem to develop more bridging social capital. Evidence to support this lies in each of the interviews conducted with individual refugees. While those from the North reported that they mostly interacted with people from Sudan, those from the South reported the opposite. A number of different factors might help to clarify this idea. First, it seems that more people from South Sudan rely on the services of resettlement agencies upon initial arrival in the area. Those interviewed from the North as well as people who work with various refugee services mentioned this. Reasons for this could include less formal education when they arrive in the United States or less knowledge about Western culture. Although this is not the case for people interviewed for this project, many individuals mentioned people who came from South Sudan who were in this position upon arrival in the United States. The people who come to Guilford County as their location of initial resettlement are more likely to form bridging social capital due to the services that the resettlement agencies provide. They are more likely to make contact with people outside of their cultural group through jobs, housing, and other social services. Another possible explanation for the higher levels of bridging social capital with southern Sudanese refugees is the high amount of publicity that these refugees have received. Popular documentaries, novels, and television specials tell the stories of the Lost Boys of Sudan, drawing special attention to them from individuals and organizations who are interested in offering charitable support, and these connections will often lead to social benefits, such as job opportunities.

7.4 Geographical Patterns of Refugees

The VOLAGs of Guilford County have played an important role in the geographical patterns created by refugees in the area. While three different resettlement agencies helped Sudanese refugees resettle in Greensboro, only one was located in High Point. The agency located in High Point is the only one with a Christian evangelical mission. Thus, the refugees resettled by them are primarily Christians from South Sudan. Consequently, a large majority of the refugees in the area from South Sudan are located in and around High Point, while the locations with large amounts of Sudanese refugees in Greensboro tend to contain a majority of people from North Sudan. While the VOLAGs started this trend, chain migration has exacerbated it, as people from Sudan who relocate to the area through secondary migration tend to resettle closer to those from their region. Family reunification also adds to this pattern.

When finding housing for refugees, the resettlement agencies tend to reuse apartment complexes with which they have developed a good relationship and can trust to treat refugees fairly (Omer 2009). This means that the agency creates geographical groupings of refugees across the county. The apartment complexes that they use, however, are located in many different regions of the county. Further, as refugees become more self-sufficient, they often move out of these areas and into houses or other apartments in different parts of the county, spreading the community out across the landscape. The ability of refugees to spread and still maintain a close-knit community evidences a pattern of heterolocalism that is occurring in the Sudanese refugee community of Guilford County. The growing physical distance between refugees within the community does not seem to have a negative effect on their development of social capital. A variety of pre-established networks still connects them,

including their religious services and other extra-curricular activities associated with the Sudanese community.

7.5 Relationships between North and South in a New Setting

The relationship between these two groups is not entirely clear from the content of interviews conducted with Sudanese refugees. Through archival research, the only evidence of gathering that included people from both North and South Sudan was a prayer service held after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 (Burchette 2005b). Mark Sills of FaithAction International House mentioned that he has seen people from the North and the South together at various International House functions, praying for their country collectively (Sills 2009).

During interviews with refugees, I asked each individual specifically about their communication and relationships with people from the other regions of Sudan. None of them stated that there was a negative relationship between these two groups; however, none told convincing stories of the two populations uniting in any way. Ahamed said that the only southern refugees that he sees regularly are those who use his money transfer station or those who come to the coffee shop, and there are not many. People also attend weddings from all parts of Sudan, so these celebrations can be a time of gathering between North and South (Ahamed 2010). Abdelgadir stated that he really had no contact with people from South Sudan, but he had no negative feelings toward them. Chol and Wani explained that because most gatherings are religious ones, this aspect breaks the Sudanese refugee community into two distinct groups. Chol described them not as northern and southern Sudanese, but as Christian and Muslim Sudanese (Chol 2010). He seemed to want the groups to be connected,

but Wani insisted that the only place where their paths really overlapped was in situations where they worked at the same location (Wani 2010).

The evidence here supports the idea that these two groups are not still politically at odds with one another when they arrive in the United States. The divide between these two groups exists geographically, due to refugee resettlement processes, and it exists culturally, due to differences in religious practices. No refugees spoke negatively about the other group, implying that the interactions they do have in Guilford County are mostly positive.

7.6 Future for the Sudanese Community in Guilford County

The future for the Sudanese community in Guilford County is uncertain. While the region has become a favorable new home to many of the refugees, some still hold out the hope of finding a way to return to Sudan someday. After the Sudanese Referendum in January 2011 determines whether Sudan will break up into two separate countries, many Sudanese refugees currently living in Guilford County may decide to return to their homeland. On the other hand, this decision could result in a non-peaceful resolution, causing even more violence and uproar in the nation and sending more refugees to the United States. Either way, the population in Guilford County still communicates regularly with their friends and relatives in Sudan, meaning that any sort of change in their homeland still directly affects them. The past few years of peace have resulted in a dwindling of new Sudanese refugees to the United States, although many are still hesitant to return to their homeland just yet. The separation between the northern Sudanese and the southern Sudanese is not likely to change in Guilford County, regardless of the political situation in Sudan. The two groups have vastly

different cultures and religions, despite sharing a similar political history, and these factors will likely cause them to maintain some distance from one another.

Changes in the size of the community are already occurring due to changes in the job market in Greensboro and High Point. Closing of factories and businesses because of economic difficulties has resulted in many Sudanese refugees losing their jobs in recent years. A large number of these refugees must locate to other areas in the United States where they can find jobs to support themselves and their families (Chol 2010). If those who remain can continue to keep the Sudanese community active and vibrant, they may be able to attract other Sudanese refugees to the area. A wide variety of educational facilities and establishment for higher learning offer resettled refugees many opportunities. Overall, the community and the area continue to be attractive to Sudanese refugees and their families, if they are able to find jobs that will support them.

7.7 Possibilities for Future Research in this Area

Further research on the Sudanese community in the Greensboro-High Point area could take many different directions. The community is constantly changing, and the city's refugee community as a whole is largely under-researched. Refugee resettlement is a phenomenon that is growing in the United States as the nation becomes involved in humanitarian efforts around the world. Researching the methods of resettlement and the lives of those involved ensures that the agencies overseeing this process are offering the best and most efficient help that they can to refugees.

One possible element of the Sudanese community in Greensboro that might benefit from further research may be the process of heterolocalism and the ways in which this

phenomenon affects the spread of Sudanese refugees to different areas in Guilford County. Refugees initially resettled in close proximity to one another no longer find it necessary to live near one another to feel a sense of community. This spreading out could be documented and mapped in order to understand the new types of connections that exist to retain this sense of community.

Another situation that could benefit from further research is the downward mobility that highly educated individuals experience when they first enter the United States. Many refugees came from educated and professionally experienced backgrounds in Africa, but they had to take low-skilled positions in places like factories and retail stores for a long period once they arrived in the country. Many had to earn their degrees again at an American university before they could practice in their chosen professions. With more research into this process and the specific needs of these professionals when they resettle in America, policy changes and grants adapted to improve this transition might not result in such a dramatic loss of status and income for these individuals.

The patterns of secondary migration and locations to which refugees tend to relocate on their own volition are in need of increasing research. Tamar Mott recently looked at the influx of Somali refugees to Columbus, Ohio (2010), but similar studies would be beneficial for other popular cities of relocation. In contrast, a look at the primary reasons for secondary resettlement and a look at the cities refugees are leaving would help resettlement agencies to make decisions about where to place future clients.

Last, the role of religion in the resettlement process is one that could use careful research to reveal some interesting insights into the lives of refugees and refugee communities. Clearly, religion played a strong role in the development of social capital for

Sudanese refugees in Guilford County and the resettlement process itself. Looking more closely into the role of religion and the success of evangelical resettlement agencies compared to secular resettlement agencies could reveal some interesting patterns.

7.8 Concluding Thoughts

The Sudanese community in Guilford County has many opportunities for the development of positive social capital for refugees from both North and South Sudan. Surprisingly, however, this population makes little impact on the landscape of the region. In fact, many residents of Greensboro and High Point, when questioned, were unaware that this population even existed in their cities.

Those who worked with refugee populations in Guilford County offered advice about ways that the wider community of citizens could help to support these groups in their community and improve their acceptance of this new population among them. Peter Gatkouth from World Relief stated that it was important to raise awareness that there are refugees in the community, and that they have a right to be there. He said that, because of their accents and skin color, refugees are often mistaken for illegal immigrants and become the victim of discrimination because of their accents or their skin color. Awareness of these populations and understanding about their culture will help to quell some of these injustices (Gatkouth 2009).

Omer Omer from North Carolina African Services Coalition stated that these refugees are a valuable source of human capital, and the government and labor force should not neglect them. They are ready and able to join the workforce and offer their abilities to the

country, and the best thing that America can do for themselves and for these refugees is to hire them and put them to work (Omer 2009).

Jacob Henry of the Newcomers School felt troubled by the pattern he saw of people who wanted to offer help to newly resettled refugees but did not understand the proper way to help and support them. As Henry explains,

People come in thinking that they're going to save these poor refugees, and [it's] kind of condescending and patronizing. They don't identify that these are among some of the most amazing people in the world because they're survivors...the creativity, the ingenuity, the ability to elude all of this danger, these people are amazing... They don't need to be felt sorry for. They don't need to be given to, to the point where they become dependent on their American support. They just need friends...they need a partner. They don't need to be patronized. (Henry 2009)

Henry's explanation of frustrations about the type of help that some members of the community offer shows a unique perspective on the best way to incorporate these new members of the community into society. He insists on treating these refugees as equals and as people with the same needs as everyone else. This is the best way to help them become a part of American communities and society.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you lived in Guilford County? Have you always lived in the same place, or have you moved around? How did you hear about new places to live?
2. Have you lived in any other part of the United States? If so, why did you relocate to Guilford County?
3. What connections (friends, co-workers, family members) do you have in other cities in the United States? How do you know them and how often do you communicate with them?
4. Where in Sudan have you lived? Are you connected to anyone from this region? Describe your connection/communication with these people. Do you speak often? Do you associate with a particular ethnic group?
5. What year did you leave? How old were you?
6. Tell me about the jobs you have had in the United States. How did you get your jobs? What were your relationships with co-workers like? Did you enjoy the job? Did you feel respected?
7. What education have you received in the United States? What education did you have previous to coming to the U.S.? How was it different from education you had in other places? How was it paid for?
8. In what other activities are you involved (religious organizations, clubs, activities, volunteer work)? How did you get involved? How long/how often? What types of connections through this have benefitted you most?
9. What percentage of people that you communicate with on a weekly basis are Sudanese? What percentage are refugees/immigrants from other places? What percentage of Sudanese connections are from your region? Are these connections different from others in any way?
10. What are your aspirations for the future? Do you wish to stay here or relocate elsewhere?

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sandra Kathleen Ziegler was born on November 26, 1980 in Akron, Ohio, to David and Kathleen Ziegler. In 1993, the Ziegler family moved to Roswell, Georgia. Sandra attended the University of Georgia from 1999-2003. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science Education, emphasis in History. From Athens, she then moved south to Thomaston, Georgia, where she taught World Geography at Upson-Lee Middle School for four years. Sandra moved to Boone, North Carolina, in 2008, and earned a Master's Degree in Geography at Appalachian State University.